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## PROGRAM HISTORY AND EVALUATION OF LANDOWNER INCENTIVES FOR MICHIGAN'S HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

*The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has long recognized the need to promote wildlife habitat management and hunting on private lands. The Michigan Hunting Access Program (HAP) provides opportunities for public hunting on privately-owned lands through an access lease arrangement between the private landowner and the DNR. The program began in 1977 with strong landowner participation but has dwindled to less than 8% of the program's peak enrollment of about 189,000 acres. Unless changes to the program are implemented, it will likely disappear within a few years. This study was developed to quantify HAP incentives and disincentives to landowner participation and to identify program areas in need of restructuring or modification to ensure continued success. Recommendations are also made to stimulate interest and participation in the program.*



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Access to privately-owned rural lands plays a critical role in achieving hunter satisfaction by meeting an increasing public demand for places to recreate. The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (1962) predicted a three-fold increase in outdoor recreation demands by the year 2000. However, that forecast was reached by 1977 (Resources for the Future 1983; Wright et al. 2002). In 1987, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors re-emphasized the need to access and use privately-owned lands to help satisfy the burgeoning demand for outdoor recreation.

Between 1987 and 1997, the number of private land owners nationwide who granted recreational access to people with whom they had no prior relations decreased by 50% (Wright et al. 1988 and 2002; Teasley et al. 1997). Additionally, studies of nationwide hunters have revealed that access to private land continues to be one of the most important issues facing the future of hunting (Responsive Management 1999, 2002, and 2004; McMullin, et al. 2000). Because hunting has always been fundamental to modern wildlife conservation programs in North America, declines in access to private lands combined with marked declines in hunting participation levels (U.S. Department of the Interior 1993, 2002a, 2002b; Frawley 2004) have serious implications for the future of wildlife conservation in Michigan. Moreover, hunting can be important for promoting stewardship of all natural resources, not just game species (Holsman 2000). Issues related to private land access are not unique to hunting and may have broader implications to other forms of outdoor recreation (Responsive Management 1999).

### **The Williamston Plan**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has long recognized the need to promote wildlife habitat management and hunting on private lands. In 1936, the Department of Conservation's Game Division (now the DNR's Wildlife Division) began sponsoring cooperative hunting clubs through the Cooperative Farm Game Management Plan, known as the "Williamston Plan." The Williamston Plan brought landowners, sportspersons, and conservationists together to provide an orderly harvest of game while controlling the level of hunting on the lands enrolled in the program (Bradt and Tubbs 1937; Bradt 1940 and 1955, and Stuewer 1953).

The Game Division issued each farmer enrolled in the plan a set of permits to distribute to hunters, granting the hunters access to the enrolled lands for hunting. Such permits were not unlimited; only a few existed for each enrolled farm (Stuewer 1953). Hunters were required to ask permission from the farmer to hunt on their property, and the farmer was under no obligation to grant permission (Bradt 1940).

The Williamston Plan was very popular in the program's early years. By 1940, nearly one-half million acres of southern Michigan game habitat were enrolled. Although the focus of the program was primarily to improve habitat for game, the Department of Conservation anticipated the plan could be the solution to a growing problem of

providing opportunities for an increasing number of bird and rabbit hunters (Stuewer 1953). However, the sudden increase in farm participation did not last long; for an unknown reason, the number of landowners enrolled in the program dropped 73% within four years.

An effort to bolster the program through a Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Program began in 1948. The goal of this effort was in “raising the awareness of the importance of wildlife in the agricultural community and that habitat development and improvement can influence wildlife populations” (Michigan Department of Conservation 1965). The program provided technical assistance, a planning service, and free materials to landowner cooperators in southern Michigan counties (Figure 1). The program grew in popularity and successfully initiated 7,150 private land wildlife management plans. However, due to the development of a rigid economy, the program was curtailed in 1963 (Michigan Department of Conservation 1965).

### **Hunting Access Program History**

The Michigan Hunting Access Program (HAP) was created in 1977 as the Public Access Stamp Program (PASP), by Public Act 373 of 1976. PASP was based upon the findings of a pilot study of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service’s Public Access Hunting Program, which was conducted in five southern Michigan counties (Brown and Dawson 1977; Squibb and Hill 1988). The primary purpose of PASP was “to lease private lands to provide public access for the purpose of hunting,” and it was originally funded through the sale of a \$1.00 stamp that was mandatory for all hunters who hunted in the southern one-third of the state (Squibb and Hill 1988), illustrated as the shaded area of Figure 1.

In the PASP, the DNR accepted applications for lease agreements from the DNR administration region known as “Zone 3” (the southern portion of lower Michigan [Figure 1]), appraised the value of the applicants’ properties for hunting purposes, negotiated lease agreements proposed for final approval, furnished appropriate signs, furnished hunter access tags, and made payments after March 1 of each year of the agreement. The Chief of Wildlife Division gave final approval of proposed leases; however, the participant landowner or the DNR could terminate the lease at any time. Each lease was a three-year contract which allowed public access for hunting during all hunting seasons between September 1 and March 31 of the following calendar year.

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) determined appropriate lease payment amounts based upon the general hunting value of the lease acreages. Landowners were issued one hunter access tag for every 10 acres. The DNR could issue additional or fewer tags to the landowner, based on an assessment by a field appraiser designated by the DNR.

Participant landowners were responsible for posting appropriate signs, permitting hunter access to leased property (without regard to race, color, creed, or sex), providing a

hunter access tag to each hunter, and obtaining approval from the DNR to significantly alter land under the lease agreement.

As with the Williamston Plan, participant landowners distributed tags to hunters requesting to hunt enrolled lands. At the end of the hunt, hunters were expected to return the tags to the check-in station. Once a landowner distributed all tags to hunters for any given day, no other hunters were allowed on the property.

Based on evaluations of the PASP (Feltus 1979, Westfall 1980, and Holocek 1982) some important changes were made, including: an increase in lease payment rates for landowners in urban counties, a more concerted effort by DNR personnel to make direct contact with participating landowners, changes in legislation to reinforce (within PASP) landowner liability protections, and a standardization of the landowner application process and lease agreement forms (Squibb and Hill 1988).

In 1984, Public Act 373 of 1976 was modified. The PASP stamp was eliminated and replaced by allocating \$0.35 of every license sold in southern Michigan for the leasing program. The program title was also changed to the Hunting Access Program.

From 1984 to 1994, HAP underwent additional changes. The program was re-codified in the Wildlife Conservation Act (PA 256 of 1988) by the Michigan legislature in a process to consolidate all natural resource related legislation within a single act. A formal evaluation of HAP with program improvement recommendations was conducted (Squibb and Hill 1988). The new law shifted HAP funding from the \$0.35 license fee allocation to language allowing utilization of needed funds from the game and fish protection account. Additionally, the authority of establishing leasing rates was shifted from the NRC to the DNR and hunter check-in stations were adapted to allow self service by the hunters, if the farmers elected to do so. The leases were also modified, extending the lease period through spring turkey hunting seasons.

In 1994, the Michigan Legislature further consolidated natural resources legislation to include environmental protection legislation, creating Public Act 451 of 1994, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA). The portion of NREPA which currently describes HAP is Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) § 324.43556 (Appendix A).

As with the Williamston Plan, HAP experienced a large enrollment early in the program followed shortly thereafter by a sharp and continuous decline in enrollment (Figure 2).

### **Current HAP Procedures**

Participants enrolled in HAP have a three-year lease (Appendix B) with the State of Michigan, through the DNR, to provide Michigan hunters (resident and non-resident) access to specific properties identified in the lease for hunting. The lease is operable during all hunting seasons between September 1 and May 31 of the following calendar year during its three-year contract. A minimum of 40 acres (35 acres after considering safety zones around buildings) must be included in the lease. The program does not

pay for any property within a safety zone. Since the focus of the program is leasing lands with habitat suitable to providing huntable game species, only parcels that have at least 20 percent of habitat types 1-9 listed on the HAP application (Appendix B) will be leased (Michigan Department of Natural Resources 1999). Rates of payment are based upon amounts of specific habitats identified upon the HAP application (Michigan Department of Natural Resources 1999).

### **HAP landowner participant study**

HAP will likely disappear within a few years if it maintains its current structure. However, the basic need for which HAP was initiated will still exist. Survey data demonstrate that hunters prefer to travel fewer than 30 miles from home, hunters want more land in proximity to urban areas, and hunter satisfaction is often related to the perceived concentration of hunters in a given area (Squibb and Hill 1988; Responsive Management 2004). Therefore, successfully recruiting and retaining Michigan hunters will be strongly influenced by maintaining (or improving) access in southern lower Michigan, where 90% of Michigan's population and about 70% of Michigan hunters reside (U.S. Census Bureau 2000; Frawley 2004). To address this need, the DNR designed a study to quantify Hunting Access Program incentives and disincentives to landowner participation and to identify program areas in need of restructuring or modification to ensure continued success.

### **METHODS**

A survey of all HAP participating landowners was conducted during the summer of 2005. The survey was divided into two segments: current landowner participants (landowners listed as enrolled for the 2004/2005 lease year; CLP) and past landowner participants (participants who had removed themselves from the program; PLP). Questionnaires covered topics of reasons for entering HAP, such as satisfaction with HAP provisions, landowner property uses, and reasons for removing property from HAP.

Questionnaires to 83 CLPs (Appendix C) were mailed in early August 2005, followed by a telephone call to non-respondents. Five surveys were undeliverable, resulting in an adjusted sample size of 78. Forty-nine CLPs returned their questionnaire (63% response rate). If CLPs returned a questionnaire indicating they had removed their properties from the program for the 2005/2006 lease year, the landowners were re-categorized as a PLP.

Essay-style questions included in the CLP questionnaire requested information regarding the incentives and problems that would influence participants to either remain enrolled in the HAP or remove their properties from the program. The responses to these questions were used to develop multiple choice questions regarding the same topics for the PLP questionnaire.

A contact list of PLPs was compiled by searching historic HAP files and databases. Since four separate regional administrative units maintained files of historic landowner participants, some inconsistencies existed in available records. In some regions, administrators had maintained records for landowners enrolled from the beginning of PASP inception, while others had already purged all historic files for the program, including those from the 2003/2004 lease year.

Questionnaires to 183 PLPs (Appendix D) were mailed in late August 2005. Since additional contact information was extremely limited, no additional contacts were made. One hundred eight questionnaires were undeliverable, resulting in an adjusted sample size of 75. Thirty-seven PLPs returned their questionnaires (49% response rate).

All data from returned questionnaires was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel. Estimates were not adjusted for any potential response or non-response bias.

Choice model analysis was used for question number 13 of the PLP questionnaire (Appendix D). Hypothetical average lease amounts of \$7.00 per acre, \$11.50 per acre, or \$16.00 per acre were randomly assigned to respondents. This design allowed for the examination of the effect that a particular lease amount had on a respondent's willingness to accept the lease. Since respondents had previously removed themselves from the program, additional data is gained by observing that none of the respondents participate in the lease program at the current average lease amount of \$5.50. This observation was combined with the responses to question 13 when estimating the choice model (Adamowicz et al. 1994). Using the combination of these two observations for each respondent, the statistical model estimates the probability that a respondent would accept a lease at a given price. The "yes" probability is modeled as a function of the lease amount (price) and a constant.

A common approach to such choice modeling involves assuming that the errors ( $\varepsilon$ ) are independent and identically distributed from a Type I extreme value distribution (Louviere et al. 2000) with a mean of 0 and scale factor 1, yielding the logit form for the choice probabilities as follows:

$$Prob (Yes Accept the Lease) = F (\alpha + \beta Price) = 1 / (1 + e^{-(\alpha + \beta Price)}),$$

where  $\alpha$  represents the parameter for the constant and  $\beta$  represents the parameter on the lease price. This form represents the choice model that was estimated by maximum likelihood estimation using LIMDEP software (Greene 2003). This is the most widely used form of the binary stated choice model (Louviere et al. 2000).

## RESULTS

The average amount of CLP property enrolled in HAP was 202 acres (ranging in size from 40 to 1186 acres). CLPs have been enrolled in the program an average of 16 years (ranging from 5 to 27 years). The average amount of PLP property enrolled in

HAP was 168 acres (ranging in size from 44 to 1000 acres). PLPs have been enrolled in the program an average of seven years (ranging from 1 to 20 years) [Table 1].

### **Reasons for enrolling in HAP**

The two most common reasons to join HAP, for both CLPs and PLPs, were for financial benefits provided by the program and for a better system of granting hunters access to their property (Figure 3). Over 70% of CLPs were “moderately to very satisfied” with how the program measured up to their expectations (Figure 4). PLPs were less satisfied regarding their expectations of program provisions (Figure 4).

### **Agriculture production, habitat/wildlife management, and hunting**

The average amount of CLP properties that are actively farmed is 26%.

Similar proportions of PLPs and CLPs conducted wildlife and habitat management on their enrolled properties (29.7% and 28.6%, respectively), yet 61% of CLPs and 70% of PLPs (or their immediate family) use their HAP enrolled lands for hunting. For both groups, white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), squirrel (*Sciurus* spp.), and pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) were the most pursued game species by the participants or their immediate family (Figure 5).

### **Level of hunting-related problems on HAP enrolled lands**

Approximately half of PLPs and CLPs have never experienced a problem with poaching and property theft (Figures 6 and 7). However, more PLPs experienced a problem with property destruction, trespassing, and negative confrontations with hunters, (19%, 22%, and 24%, respectively) than CLPs (0%, 8%, and 2%, respectively) while their properties were enrolled in HAP (Figures 8, 9, and 10).

### **Law enforcement and landowner satisfaction**

Both CLPs and PLPs have needed to contact law enforcement personnel. However, 43% of PLPs needing law enforcement assistance were either “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the outcome (Figure 11). Conversely, 64% of CLPs contacting law enforcement were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the outcome (Figure 11). Explanations of specific incidents were not pursued, nor were any specific situations identified in the “additional comments” section of the questionnaires.

### **Managing hunter access after HAP**

If HAP were no longer available, the majority of CLPs would either lease access for hunting to private individuals or parties (33%) or reserve hunting on their lands for family and friends (19%) (Figure 12). Since leaving HAP, the majority of PLPs have primarily selected the same two methods of managing hunter access. However, 44% of PLPs

reserve hunting on their previously enrolled lands for family and friends, while 25% lease access to private individuals or parties (Figure 13).

### **Likelihood of CLP re-enrollment and HAP recommendation to other landowners**

Eighty-five percent of CLPs were either “likely” or “very likely” to re-enroll their property in HAP following the conclusion of their current lease (Figure 14). Eighty percent of CLPs would recommend the program to other landowners. CLPs in favor of the program provided statements such as:

- *“gives hunters a place to hunt legally and a source of cash”*
- *“meet great people”*
- *“well organized and run program”*

CLPs against program recommendation provided statements such as:

- *“not enough compensation”*
- *“hunters will pay more to lease land than the DNR will pay”*
- *“too many hunters”*

Thirty percent of CLPs had additional lands that would qualify for HAP which were not currently enrolled. Reasons for CLPs not enrolling these properties in HAP include reserving them for family and friends to hunt, the properties were too close to their residence, or the DNR lease payment was too low for that particular portion of land.

### **Reasons for leaving HAP**

Examples, provided by CLPs, of problems that would influence a landowner to remove their properties from HAP (Appendix E) were used to survey PLPs about their reasons for removing their properties from the program. The largest proportion of PLPs (34%) removed their property due to either “negative confrontations with hunters” or that “hunters were disrespectful to their property” (Figure 15). The survey did not capture any individuals whose property was removed because of the landowner selling the property, urbanization, or development (Figure 15).

### **Important non-financial incentives for HAP**

Examples, provided by CLPs, of incentives that would influence a landowner to remain enrolled in HAP (Appendix F) were used survey PLPs about what non-financial incentives they would suggest are included in HAP. Over 67% of PLPs considered “reduced liability” and “knowing who and when a hunter is on the property” as “very to critically important” aspects of a successful program (Figure 16). The least important aspect was limiting access to only youth hunting or youth mentoring programs (Figure 16).



## **Lease Price**

It was assumed that CLPs were satisfied with current lease rates because they had not yet removed their properties from HAP. However, even though nearly 90% of CLPs were satisfied with how the program met their financial expectations (Figure 4), 53% of CLPs would be influenced to remain enrolled in the program by greater financial incentives (Appendix F).

For the PLPs, a choice model was applied to the reenrollment question (question 13, Appendix D) to estimate the effect that lease prices have on reenrollment. The estimated parameter on the constant term ( $\alpha$ ) was highly significant and negative which reflects the fact that, on average, only about 10% of the data contained positive responses at the observed and offered lease prices (Table 2). The estimated parameter on the lease price ( $\beta$ ) was positive and significant at the 95% level ( $p=0.0106$ ), indicating that higher lease prices induced more PLP respondents to indicate they would adopt the lease, although the share of respondents predicted to do so remains low (Table 2).

The marginal effect of a change in price on the probability of accepting the lease is significantly different than zero at the 1% level (Table 2). The estimated marginal effect indicates that a \$1 increase in the lease price would increase the probability of adopting the lease by 0.016 or about 1.6%. Thus, while the results indicate price has a significant effect on lease acceptance, the sensitivity of the lease acceptance is not very large when prices increase.

## **DISCUSSION**

A substantial portion of PLPs (61%) were unable to be contacted for this study. Given the age of the contact information for PLPs there are likely multiple reasons for null contacts. PLPs may have passed away, moved (with no forwarding information), or sold their properties since the time period in which they were enrolled in HAP or PASP. For this reason, the levels to which these factors contribute to the removal of properties from HAP could not be measured, even though each could have tremendous impact on program participation.

Previous research on issues associated with access to private lands has identified numerous limiting factors for landowner participation (Durrell 1968; Brown 1974; Holecek and Westfall 1977; Brown et al. 1984; Wright and Fesenmaier 1990). Wright et al. (1988) and Wright et al. (2002) hypothesized five primary factors which likely influence landowner decisions regarding their policies of recreational-use access for their properties: 1) economic incentives, 2) landowner opinion of users, 3) perceived level of liability and risk, 4) landowner purposes for the land, and 5) landowner aversion to certain uses (e.g., hunting, snowmobiling, etc...). Since all participants in this program have allowed (or continue to allow) hunting on their properties, they likely do not have a general aversion to hunting as an activity. However, the remaining 4 domains of landowner influence identified by Wright et al. (1988) and Wright et al.

(2002) may affect HAP participants' decisions regarding granting access to their property.

### **Economic Incentives**

Although both groups of landowner participants were reasonably satisfied with the amount of money provided by HAP leases, relative to what they initially expected (Figures 4), 50% of CLPs (based on comment included on returned questionnaires) think that increased lease amounts would be an added incentive to remain in the program. In addition, more PLPs observed hunter-related problems on their HAP enrolled properties (Figures 8, 9, and 10), indicating that withdrawal from the program was not necessarily based solely upon expected amounts of payment. Instead, property extraction was more likely due to the payment not compensating enough for unexpected problems that were experienced.

While the majority of Michigan hunters (92%) do not lease properties, those that do lease property are primarily (96%) deer hunters (Leonard 2004). Even though HAP leases provide opportunities for all hunters, hunters desiring exclusive rights to pursue deer on private lands may drive the market for leasing properties. Currently, the average payment for a HAP lease (about \$5.55 per acres) is likely below lease payments from the private sector. Based upon choice model analysis, an increase of \$10.00 per acre could increase HAP enrollment by about 16% (Table 2). Thus, with 88 landowner participants currently enrolled, the \$10.00 per acre increase could raise HAP enrollment to about 103 landowner participants.

However, there are several caveats associated with the choice model analysis. First, the number of observations in this study is very small. Second, the results rely on the use of two observations per respondent. Even though these observations are likely correlated for each respondent, there is not enough data to estimate a panel model that would adjust the standard errors to correct for this correlation. Third, there are likely many other factors that affect lease acceptance, but these have not been modeled here. Finally, the analysis indicates there is a price effect. However, the exact results here are based on a very small sample by the standards of such analyses and additional analysis has the potential to better quantify this effect.

### **Landowner opinions of users**

In addition to higher rates of compensation, leasing access to private entities offers the landowner greater control over exactly who and when hunters access their properties. A study of access to privately-owned lands in Dutchess County, New York identified that decisions about granting access to strangers is often dependent upon the landowners "lack of comfort with strangers, concerns about control of their property, and concerns about safety" (Lauber and Brown, 2000). Public access programs should recognize the desire for private landowners to maintain control over access to their property by developing "flexible, mutually acceptable access requirements that both increase public

access while allowing landowners to exert some influence on the numbers of hunters allowed on their lands” (Responsive Management 1999).

Although Michigan’s HAP restricts the number of hunters allowed on a given piece of property at one time (based upon acres of enrolled property) and the statute governing HAP provides landowner “authority to control hunter access” (Appendix A), comments from landowners participating in HAP indicate they still experience (or perceive to experience) loss of access control on their enrolled properties (Appendix E). Programs which focus on promoting hunter ethics, respect for the land, appreciation toward the landowner, and helping the landowner regulate access may influence landowner participation in public access programs, such as HAP (Responsive Management 1999).

### **Landowner liability and risk**

Through the years, research into limiting factors for landowners granting access to their property has identified, as a primary concern, the fear of being sued (or being held liable) for injuries sustained by users while on the property (Holocek and Westfall 1977; Wright et al. 2002). In an effort to encourage private landowners to make their lands available for public recreation, Michigan enacted MCL 324.73107 (Appendix A), a statute to protect landowners from liability for injuries sustained by recreational users of their properties. This statute explicitly provides that landowners who allow recreational access are protected from liability, except in situations where “injuries were caused by the gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct of the owner, tenant, or lessee” (Appendix A, MCL 324.73107). To reinforce these protections to landowner’s enrolled in HAP, the same language is reiterated in MCL 324.43556 (Appendix A).

“Gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct” is a broadly defined term and could likely include responsibilities of the landowner for “discoveries of danger” and “intentional and hateful acts” (Wright et al. 2002). An example of a discovery of danger would be finding an abandoned well on the property in question. The landowner would likely be responsible for making a concerted effort to either: 1) warn all users of the danger or, 2) remove the danger completely. An example of intentional and hateful acts could include the placement of spikes in a trail to prevent vehicle access. The landowner could likely be responsible if a user were injured by such a hazard, even though the intent of the act was not to cause injury but to prevent vehicle access.

Over five decades have passed since the adoption of Michigan’s recreational-use statutes. From the time of their inception through 2002, Michigan courts have heard 29 cases of landowner liability. Only seven of these cases resulted in landowner liability. None of any cases heard were related to hunting. In fact, from 1965 to 2002, only 15 cases nationwide involved hunting related injuries (seven of which occurred in a single state other than Michigan). Wright et al. (2002) states “that landowners allowing access for hunting have minimal lawsuit and liability exposure.”

## **Landowner purposes for the land**

Specific needs for the properties by the landowner can sometimes conflict with the provisions of HAP. As in the following two statements from PLPs, the program may be regarded as beneficial and positive but conflict with landowner objectives for their properties has the potential to impact landowner enrollment.

*"We are open to the public as a retail nursery. The seedlings we plant are difficult to see and can be easily trampled. Shooting toward our saleable trees is likely and possibly damaging. However, we are also losing \$3-5000 to deer damage and spend \$3000 to control deer with sprays."*

*"The hunting access program was a good program when the farm was in the Federal CRP program but when the farm is in crops, hunters would trample the crops creating a great deal of damage. I was denied the CRP program and so had no choice but to go into crops. Thank you for a good program, I enjoyed working with the program."*

Efforts to promote landowner enrollment should provide options which include opportunity to compromise with potential landowner participants' goal, if needed. This would allow for maximum enrollment by landowners.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The drastic decline in HAP participation by landowners over the past decade (Figure 2) combined with the data implicating a low program recruitment rate even with extreme increases in lease payments (Table 2) could imply the DNR should eliminate HAP. This would allow staffs to more effectively administer other beneficial programs. However, at this time, the elimination of HAP could likely have further reaching consequences than would be expected. According to Responsive Management (2004), access issues are often much more than physical access points, trails, roads, and lands to hunt on; it is also a matter of perception regarding what is available. If hunters perceive there are not enough places to hunt (or that there are fewer places to hunt than there were historically), their level of dissatisfaction rises (whether or not their perception of the situation is true) and may contribute to overall declines in hunter participation (Responsive Management 2004). Currently, the percentage of Michigan's population that purchases hunting licenses is declining (Frawley 2004). Combined with an apparent increase of urbanization in southern Michigan, loss of HAP could result in a greater decline of Michigan citizen's participating in hunting.

No single solution will increase participation by landowners in Michigan's HAP. Results from this study reveal that every landowner regards a unique mixture of apprehensions and incentives toward participating in this program. However, two specific areas of landowner concern were distinctive as being highly important to continued participation in HAP: 1) the ability to maintain some additional control over access to their property (compared to what they have been offered), and 2) assurance they will be protected from issues of liability. The following recommendations address each of these issues.

### **RECOMMENDATION ONE**

**Develop a campaign to inform potential landowner participants about the truths and myths associated with landowner liability and risk.**

In Michigan, recreational use and recreational trespass laws seem to be little known and even less understood by landowners; causing them to be unaware of the significant liability protection afforded to them for recreational-use of their lands causing the perception of liability to be greater than the actual level of risk. The DNR must develop an initiative to better communicate, to current and potential HAP participants, the reality and degree of liability insulation provided by Michigan's recreational-use and recreational trespass statutes. Such an initiative could be accomplished by development of distributional flyers, brochures, or radio and television public service announcements advertising the liability benefits of participating in HAP. In addition the DNR must better inform all personnel throughout the Department of what actual liability risks exist for private landowners for allowing recreational-use of their lands. By not correcting false perceptions of liability risk, the DNR enables that perception, worsening all access opportunities.

### **RECOMMENDATION TWO**

**Develop a program to increase hunter appreciation for HAP enrolled lands, foster higher hunter ethical standards, and afford the HAP landowner participants additional opportunities to control access for HAP enrolled properties.**

Some states (e.g., Colorado, Washington) offer in-depth, advanced hunter education programs or workshops that promote responsible hunting ("Master Hunter" certifications). In Michigan, landowners could use such a program to identify hunters who have advanced training in game management, hunting ethics, and hunting skills. According to the statute directing HAP administration, the DNR "may issue orders...governing the administration and operation of the hunting access program". The lease agreement between the DNR and the landowner could be written to include terms that allow the landowner, if they so choose, to deny access to hunters that cannot present a "Master Hunter" certification.

Such a program would have goals of improving hunter/landowner relations, increasing hunter knowledge and skills, and expanding hunting opportunities and/or hunter access to private lands and would be designed as a respected certification program. For example, course requirements could include two segments: 1) successfully taking and passing the specific coursework and examination and 2) contribute a minimum of 12 hours of voluntary work on a landowner/hunter relationship or wildlife habitat-related project. Individuals who successfully complete the "Master Hunter" certification could receive a patch and certificate as recognition of their accomplishments and receive a periodic newsletter covering current hunting issues of interest. Each "Master Hunter" could also have the certification printed directly upon their hunting licenses as proof of certification. Added incentive for participation could include such things as special hunting opportunities offered to a limited number of hunters who successfully complete

the “Master Hunter” qualification. For instance, in Washington, Master Hunters are called upon to reduce elk populations in sensitive areas. In Michigan, such a program could be called upon by organizations, groups, or municipalities conducting special hunts, to provide a pool of individuals regarded as proficient and ethical hunters. Incentives developed with collaborating organizations could also be incorporated. Graduates of such a course or workshop could be given incentives for becoming instructors in future courses. Nominal fees charged for the certification could be used for Master Hunter program and HAP development and maintenance.

### **Other possible incentives**

The following additional recommendations are based upon items that were identified as important by some landowners. These items may help to strengthen HAP but are likely not critical to its continued growth and success.

### **RECOMMENDATION THREE**

#### **Investigate how lease payments influence landowner participation in HAP.**

Economic incentives to HAP enrollment seem important to participating landowners and current levels of payment to landowners offered by HAP may be low compared to amounts offered by private entities. However, the data acquired by this limited study suggests that, without taking into consideration additional factors, a substantial increase in lease payment would be required to significantly bolster the program. Further study into the impact of financial incentives on potential landowner participants could better clarify how higher lease payments might influence levels of landowner participation.

### **RECOMMENDATION FOUR**

#### **Ensure that wildlife and law enforcement personnel make a concerted effort to maintain reasonable contact with landowners enrolled in the program.**

In some situations, landowners may feel alone when dealing with problem situations. Both CLPs and PLPs are dissatisfied with the level of contact maintained by wildlife and law enforcement division personnel (Figure 4). By improving and maintaining contacts with landowners, through effective response to complaints and periodic on-site visits, the DNR will reinforce, to landowners, the importance of their participation in our programs.

### **RECOMMENDATION FIVE**

#### **Amend the HAP hunting guide to contain maps depicting property locations.**

The current HAP guide provides written descriptions of enrolled property locations. Producing a HAP guide that contains detailed maps of property locations would likely be easier for users of the program to locate specific areas open to hunting. Making property locations more identifiable may help reduce negative conflicts between landowner participants, neighbors and hunters using the properties.

### **RECOMMENDATION SIX**

**Offer landowners the option of DNR developed land management plans for their properties enrolled in HAP, provide plant materials for habitat maintenance, and offer technical assistance for habitat management.**

Developing management plans for landowner participants would highlight that the DNR and the users of the HAP are concerned about the long-term welfare of enrolled properties, not just for the number of animals that can be harvested. The DNR could offer landowners habitat development assistance and plant materials as added incentives to be in the program.

### **RECOMMENDATION SEVEN**

**Adapt the program to allow landowners to designate their properties for specific hunting seasons or for reserving particular dates for themselves.**

Over 60% of the landowners (or members of their immediate family) enrolled in HAP hunt on their properties enrolled in the program (Figure 5). Of those landowners that hunt (or members of their immediate family), just below 70% hunt for white-tailed deer. Fifty percent of the PLP respondents have retained their property access privileges for family members and friends to hunt (Figure 5). By restricting access on properties for specific season or for certain dates, some conflicts between landowner participants, their family and friends, and users of the program could be kept to a minimum. Since participation in Michigan small game hunting has declined more than 50% since 1960 (Frawley 2004), allowing landowners the ability to not allow access for specific seasons or dates may encourage them to enroll their properties for small game hunting but reserve deer season for themselves. Lease payments could be adjusted to accommodate such restrictions. Specific restrictions for each property could be printed in the HAP guide.

The DNR, as part of its mission, must continue to provide opportunities that increase participation in outdoor recreation, including hunting. As the demand for outdoor recreation increases, continued access and use of privately-owned lands is necessary. Michigan's Hunting Access Program meets that need; however, the program must be adaptable to changing attitudes by hunters and landowners. Periodic program evaluation and modification is essential for its continued growth and success.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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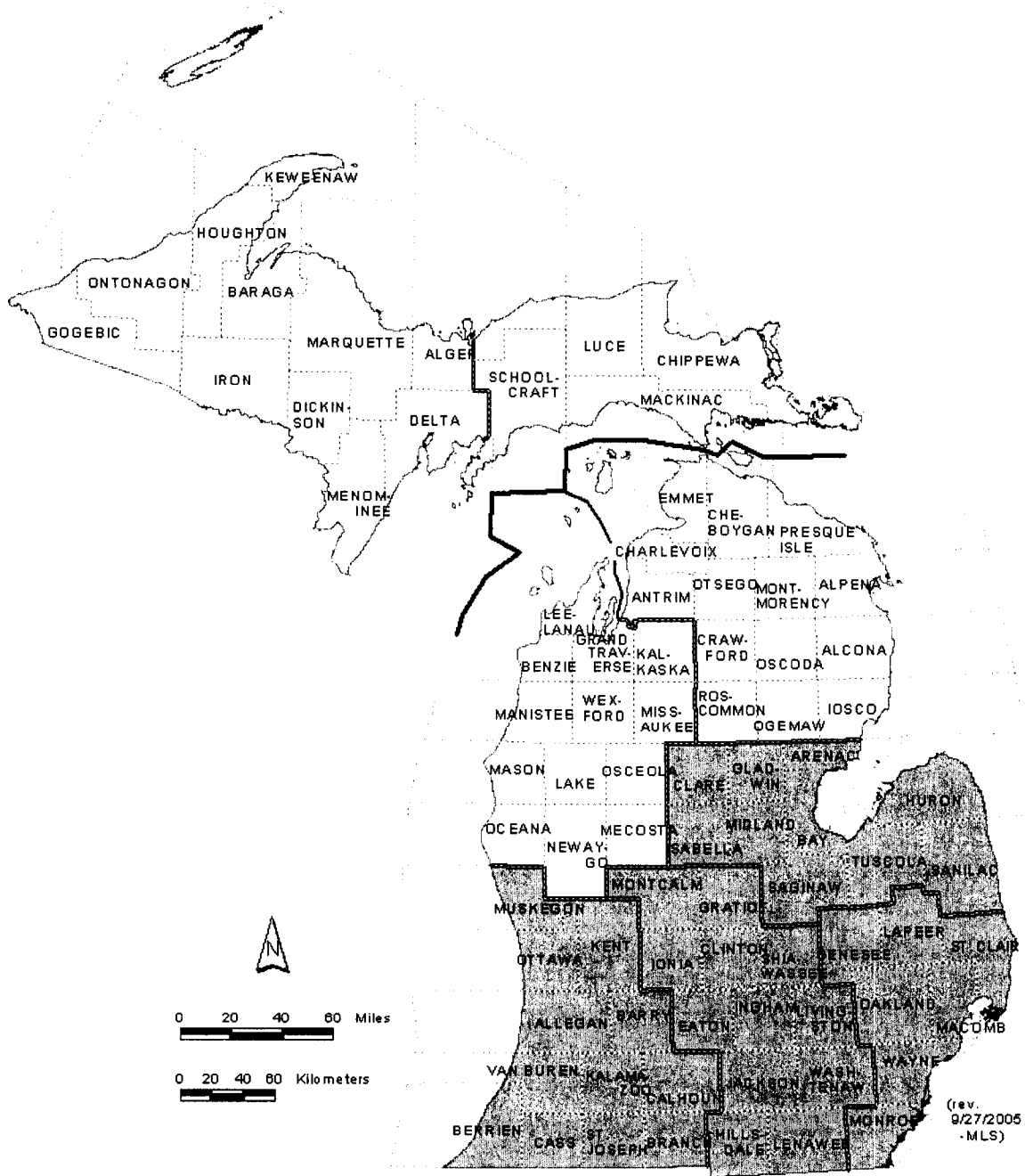


Figure 1. Counties in southern Michigan where historic and current programs for hunter access have been initiated (a.k.a. historic administrative unit "Zone 3"; shaded with gray).

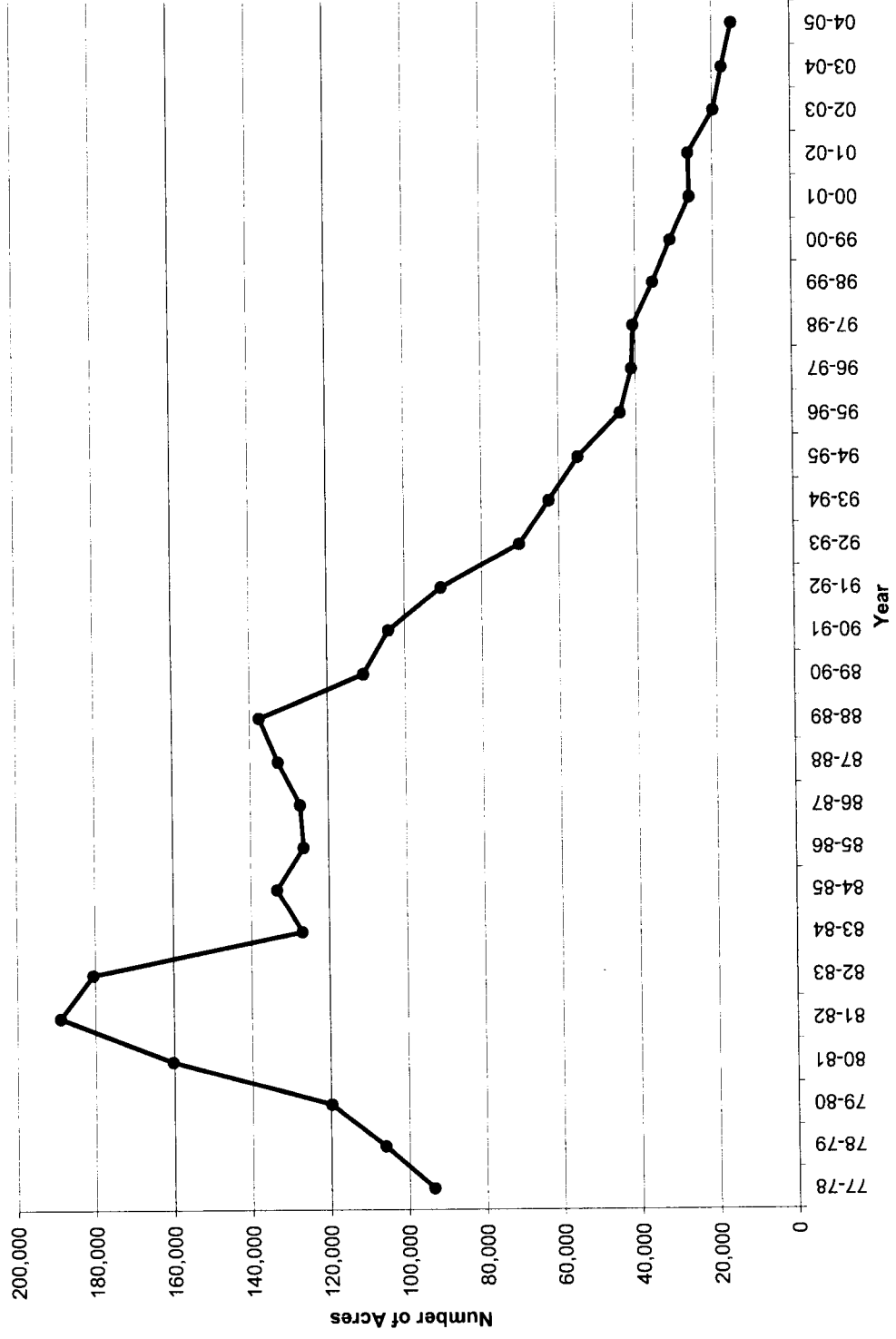


Figure 2. Yearly Hunter Access Program enrollment by acres.

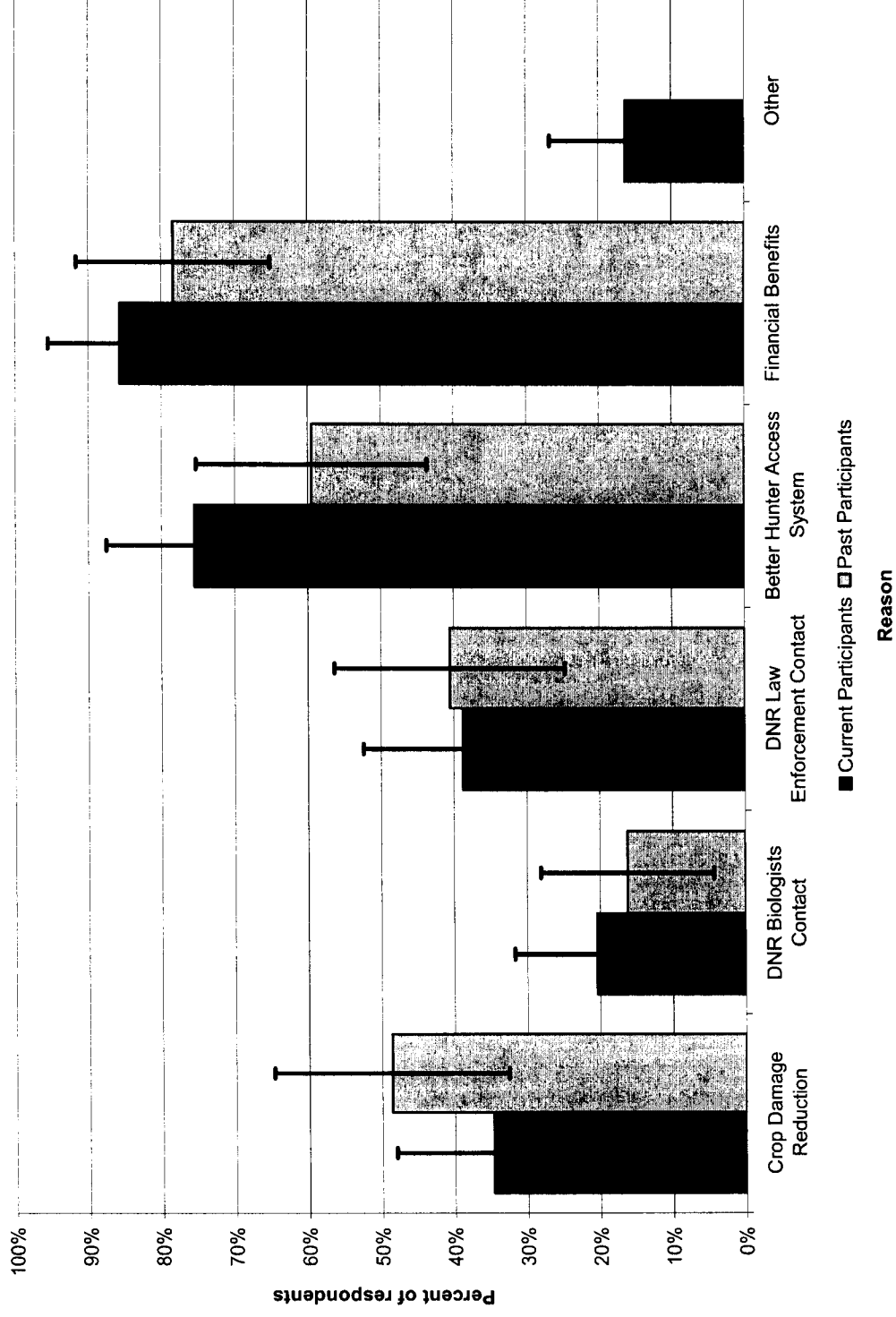


Figure 3. Reasons provided by current and past Hunting Access Program participating landowners for enrolling in Michigan's Hunting Access Program. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to provide multiple reasons.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

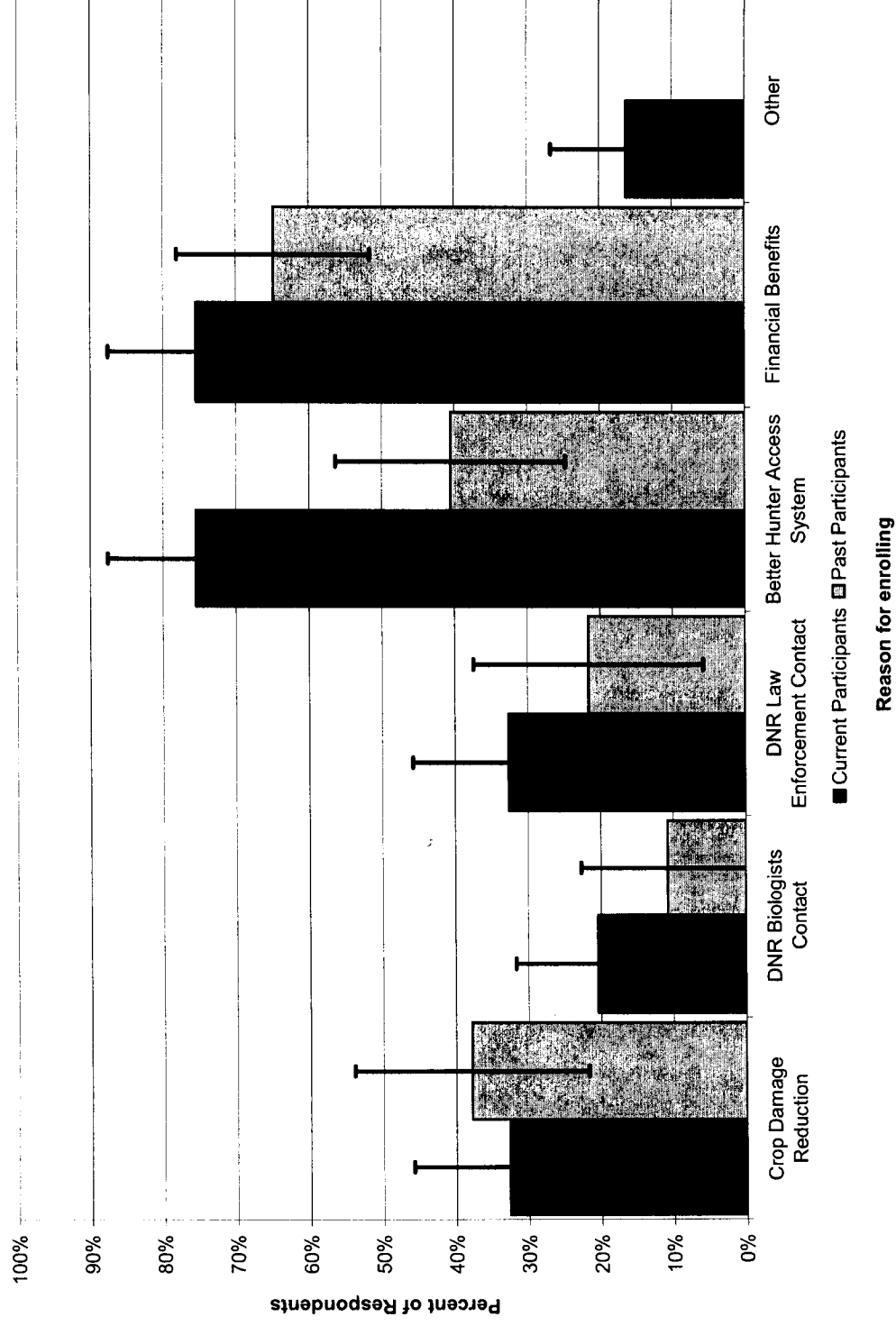


Figure 4. Percent of current and past landowner participants who are “moderately satisfied” to “very satisfied” with the provisions of Michigan’s Hunting Access Program meeting their expectations for reasons they enrolled in the program. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to provide multiple reasons.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



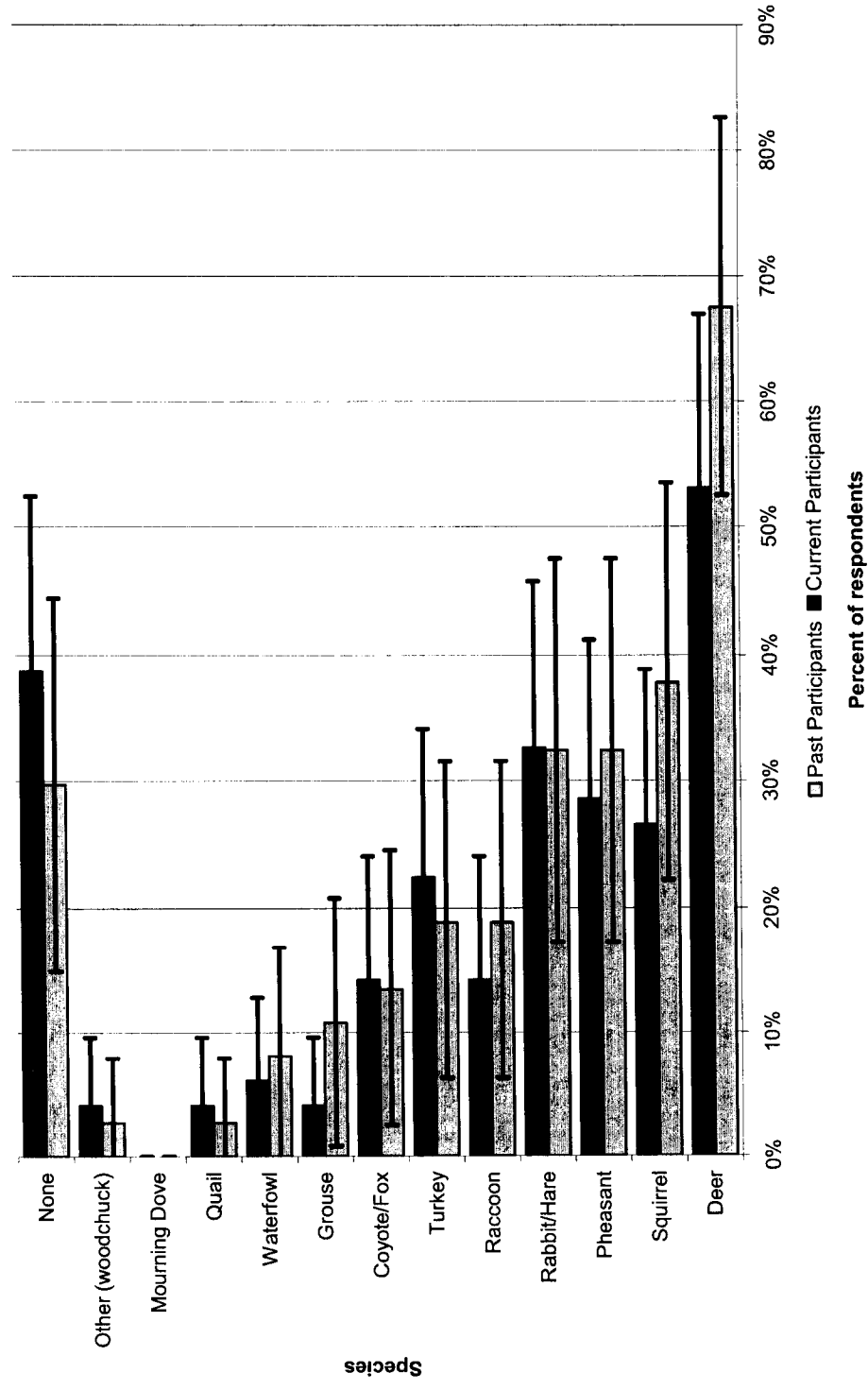


Figure 5. Species reported by landowner participants as hunted on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands by themselves or immediate family members. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to answer with multiple species.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

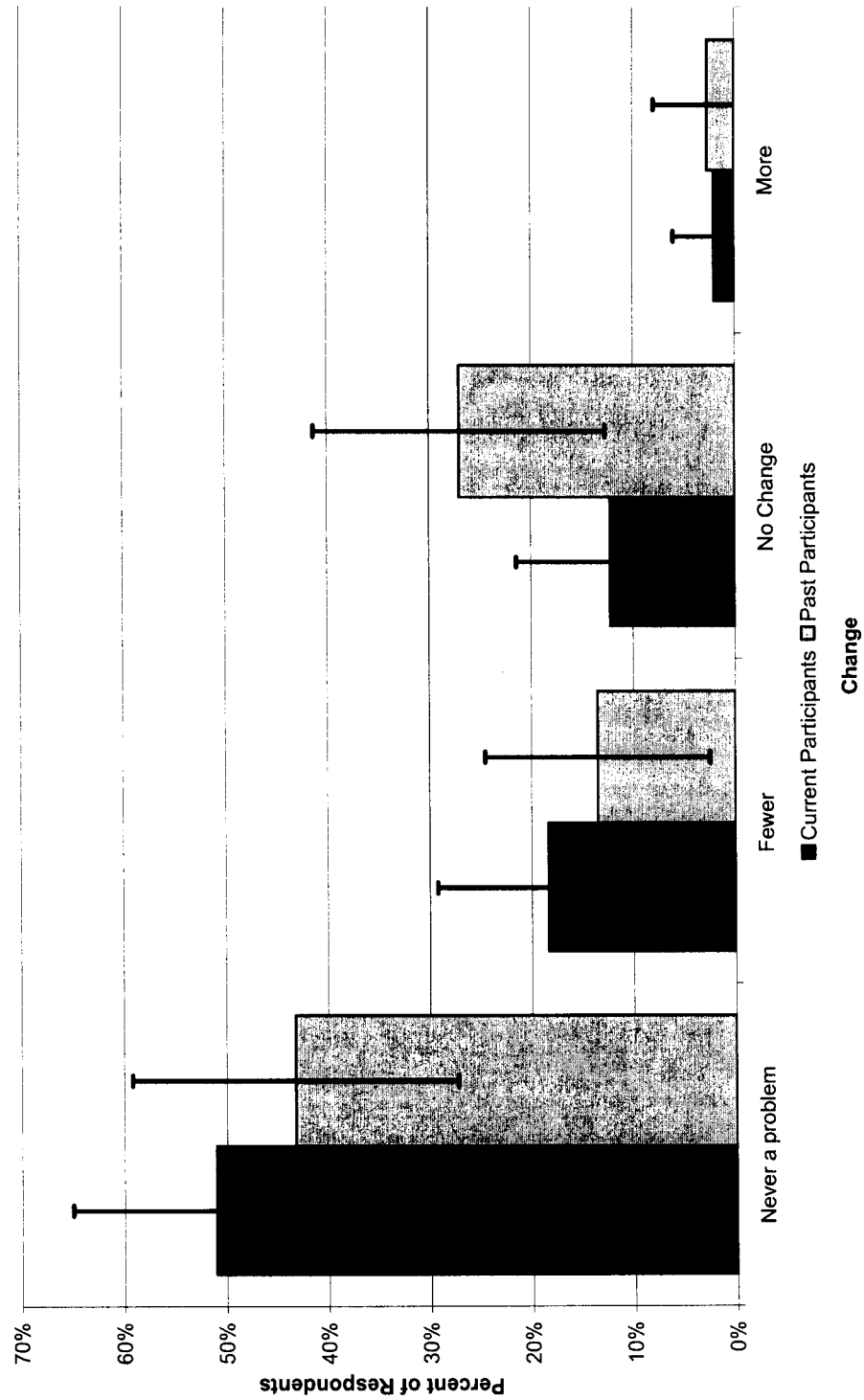


Figure 6. Change in perceived levels of poaching done by hunters on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands from before enrollment to during enrollment. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

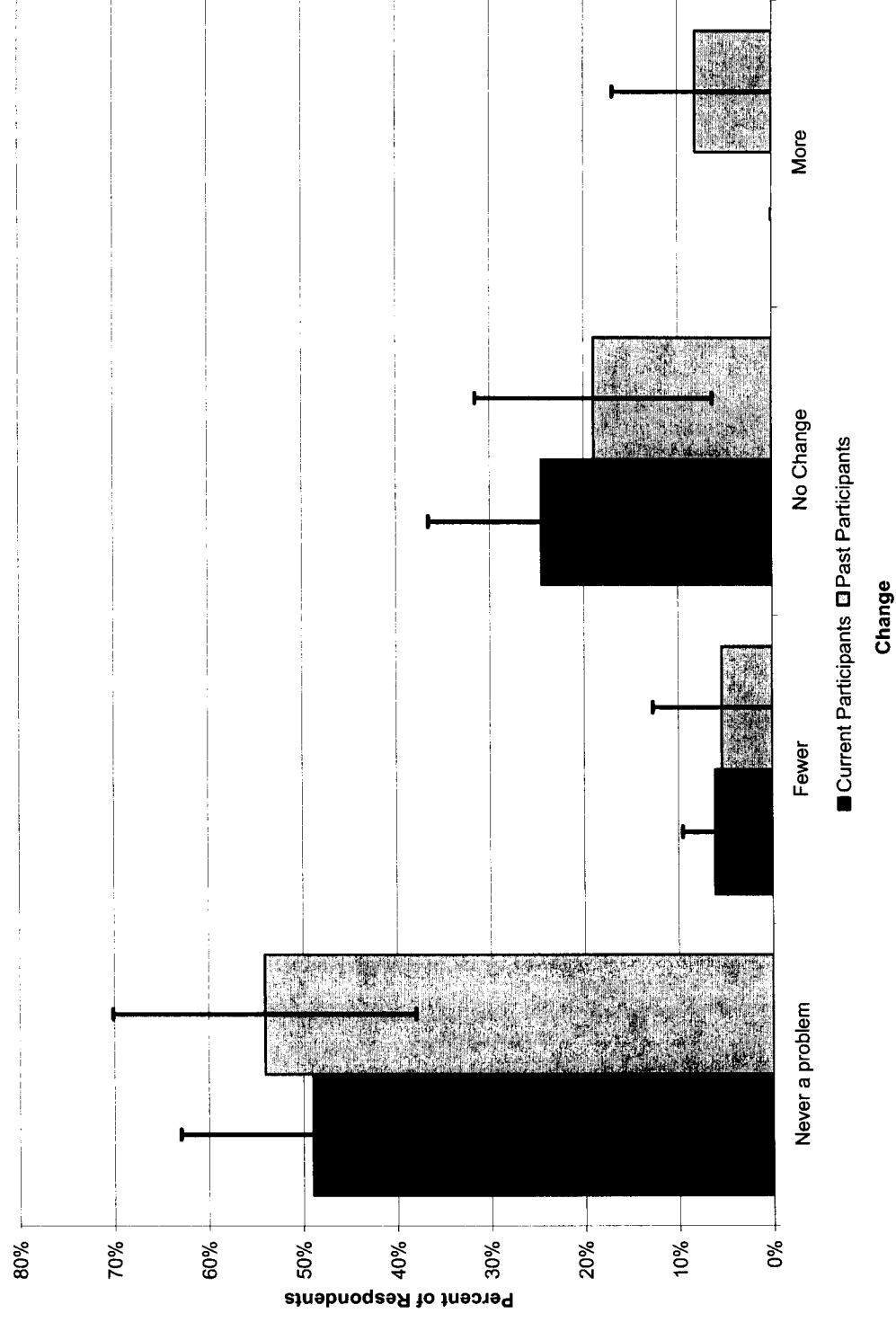


Figure 7. Change in perceived levels of property theft by hunters on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands from before enrollment to during enrollment. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

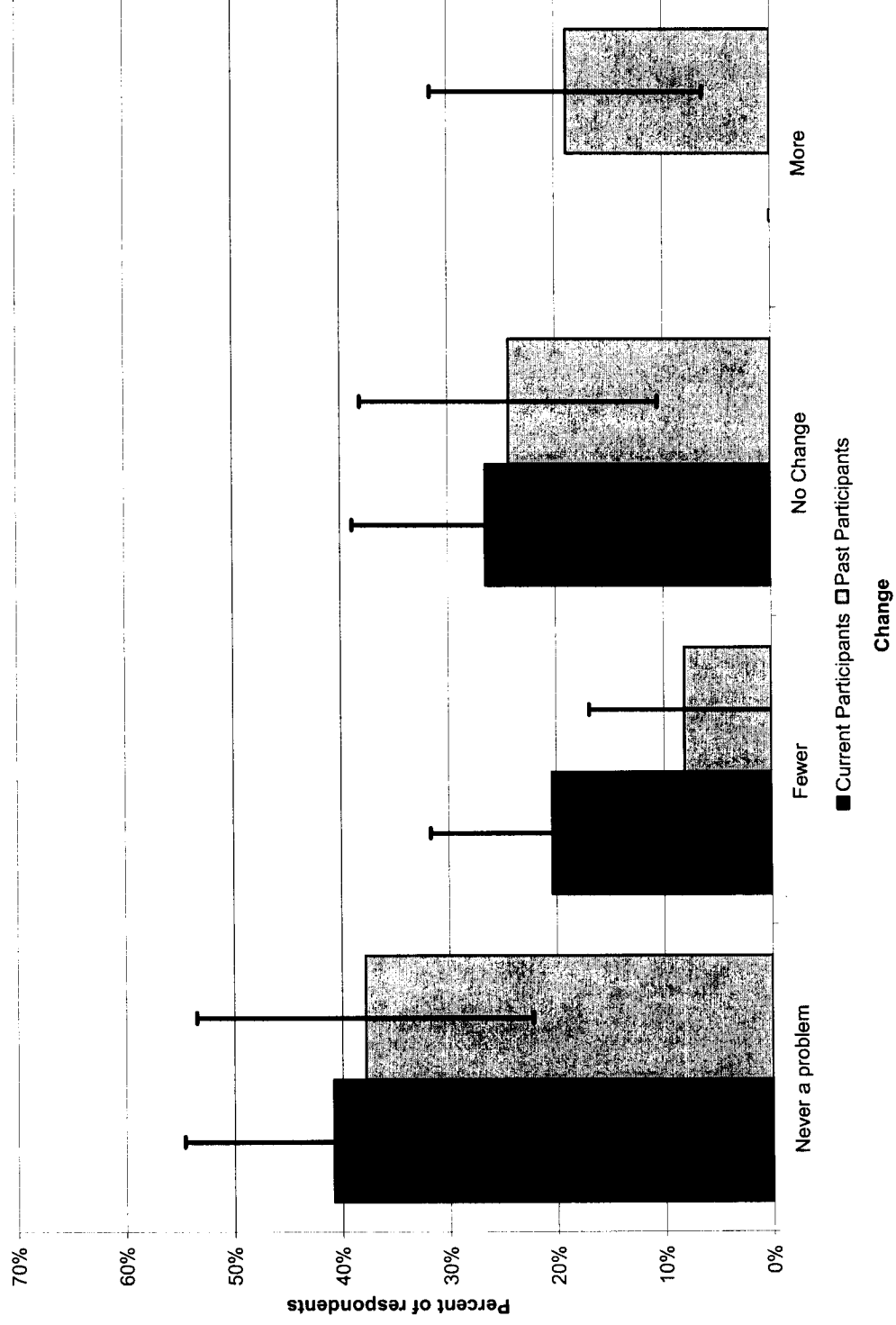


Figure 8. Change in perceived levels of property destruction done by hunters on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands from before enrollment to during enrollment. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

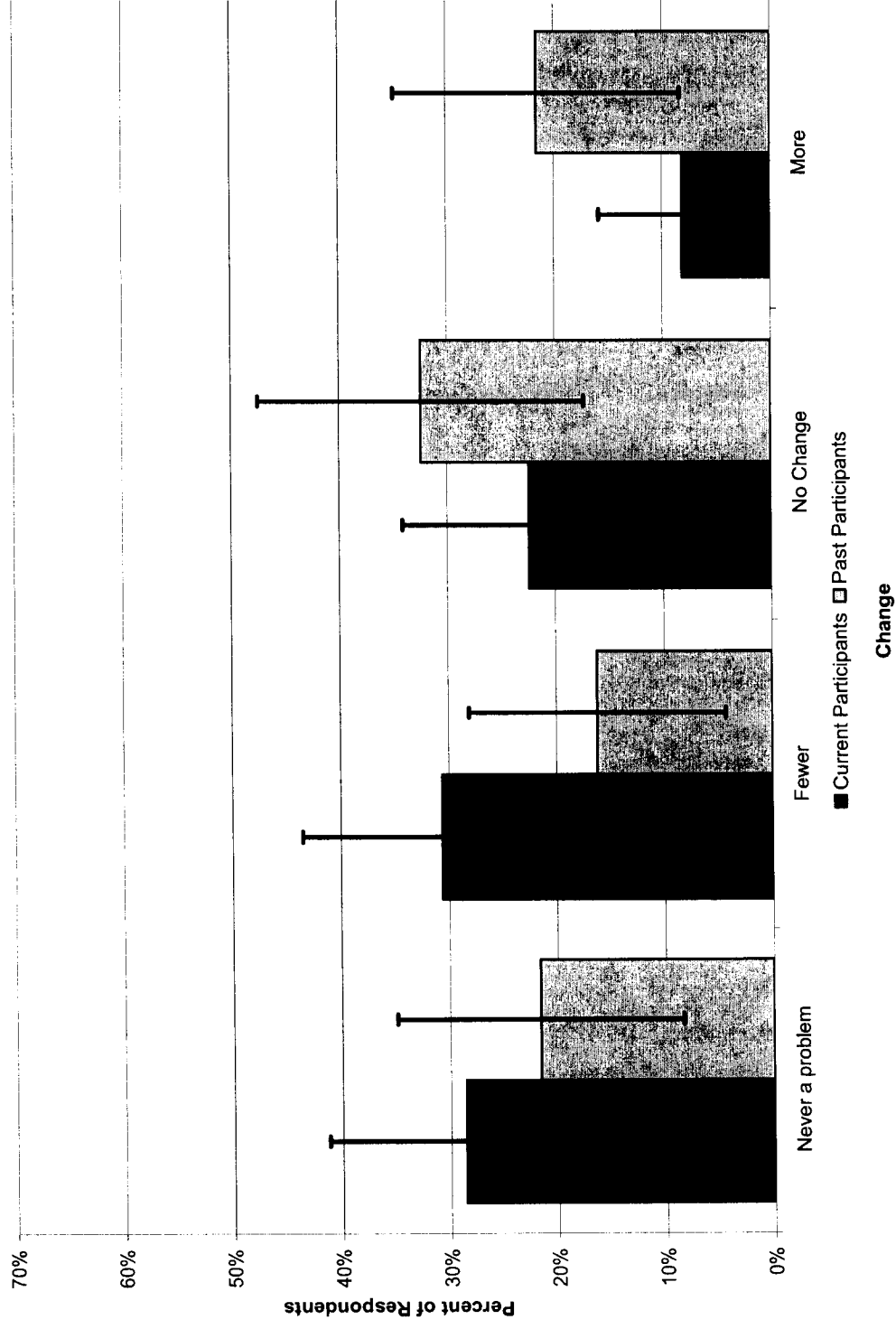


Figure 9. Change in perceived levels of trespassing by hunters on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands from before enrollment to during enrollment. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

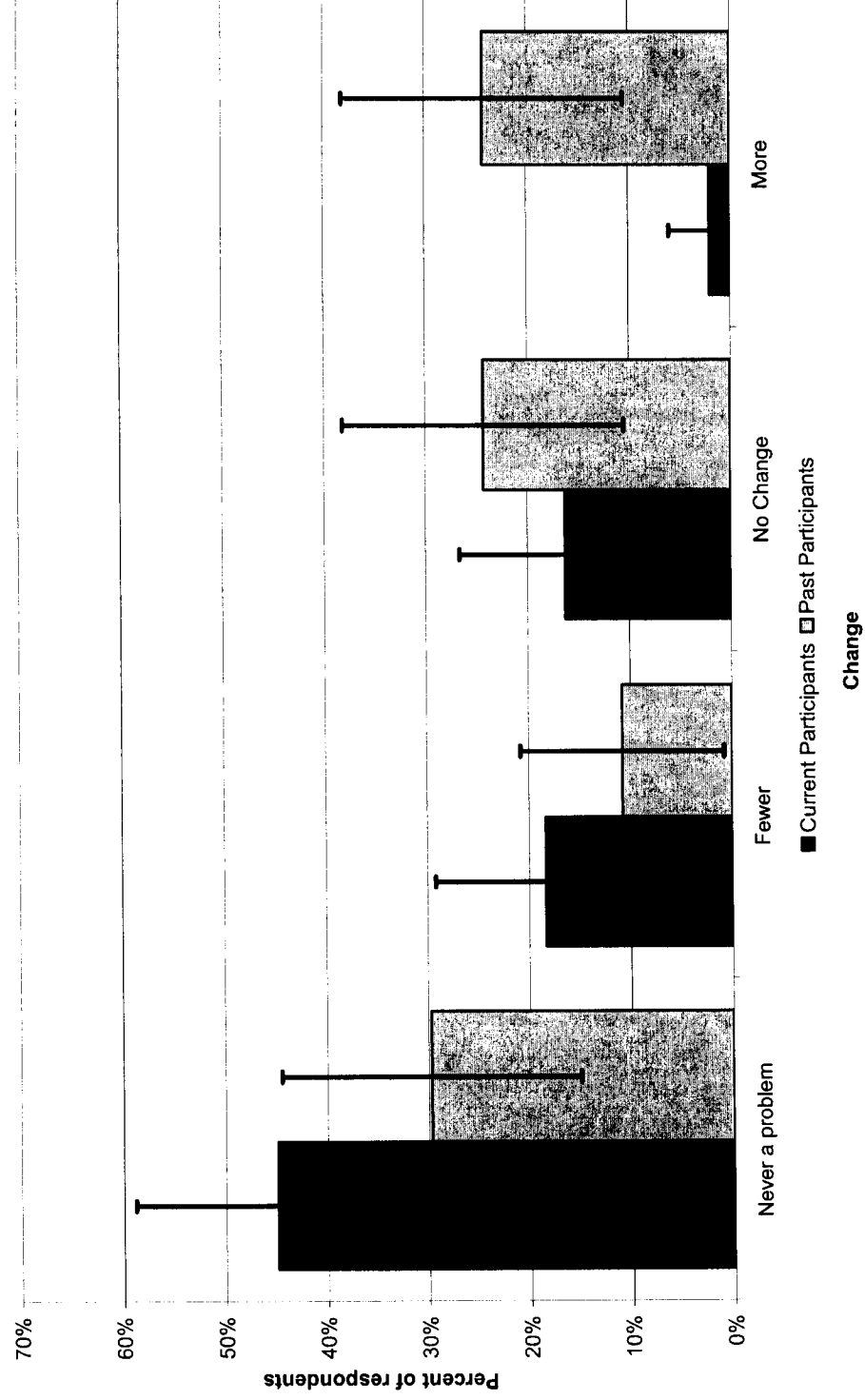


Figure 10. Change in perceived levels of negative confrontations with hunters on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands from before enrollment to during enrollment. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

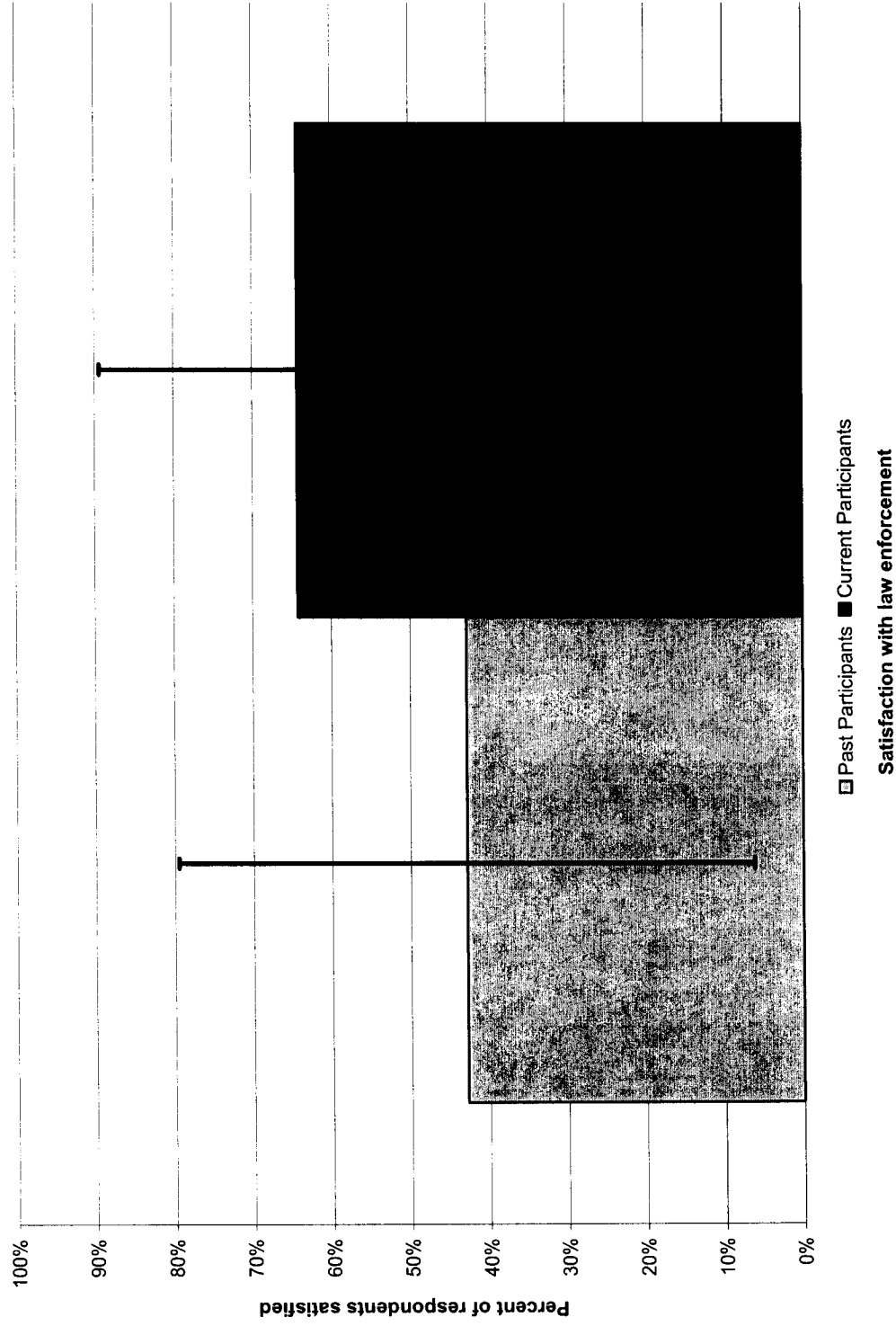


Figure 11. Level of satisfaction reported by landowner participants who had needed to contact law enforcement for a hunting-related problem on Hunting Access Program enrolled lands. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

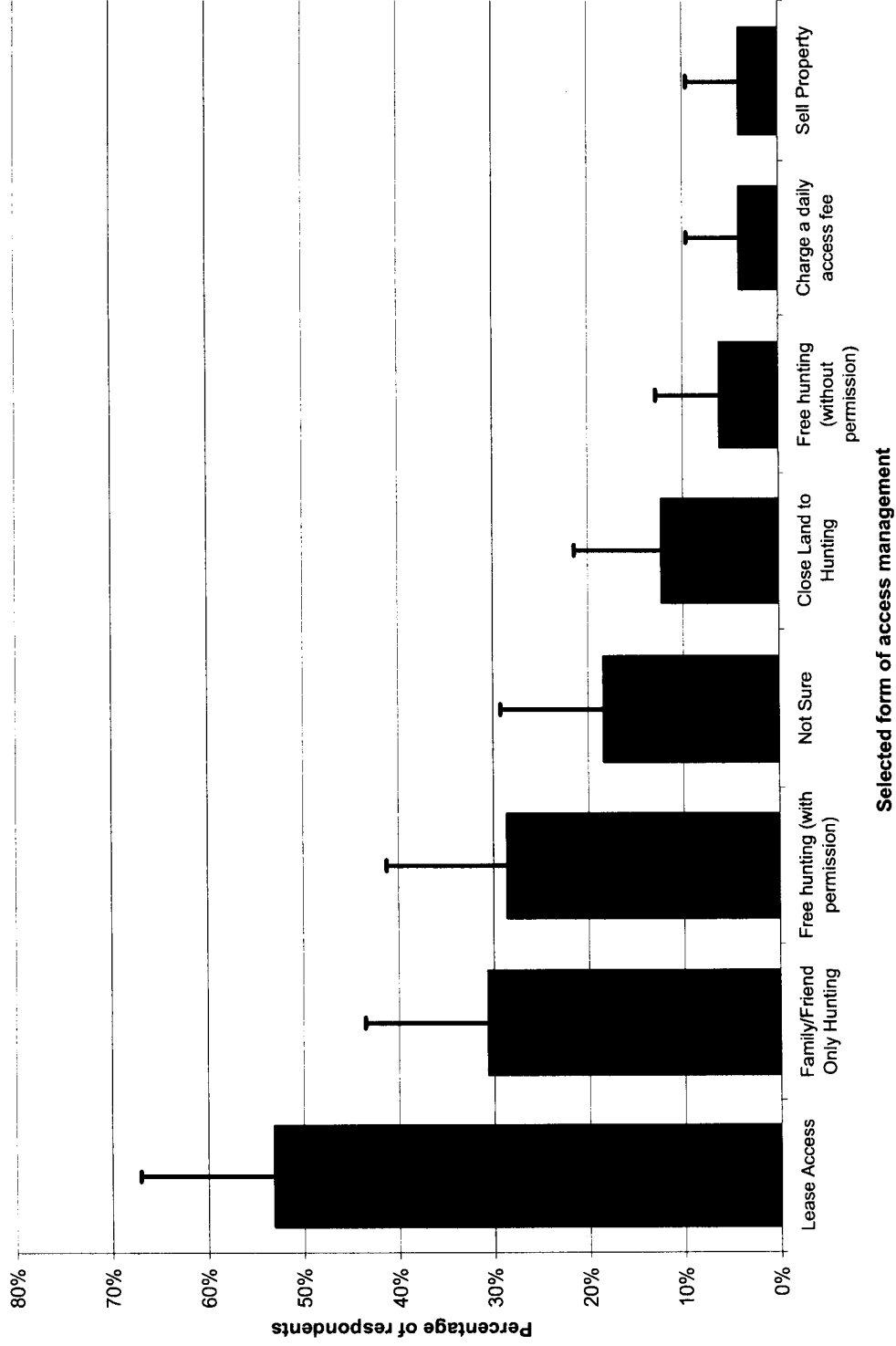


Figure 12. Types of access management current landowner participants reported they would use if Michigan's Hunting Access Program no longer existed. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to provide multiple reasons.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.



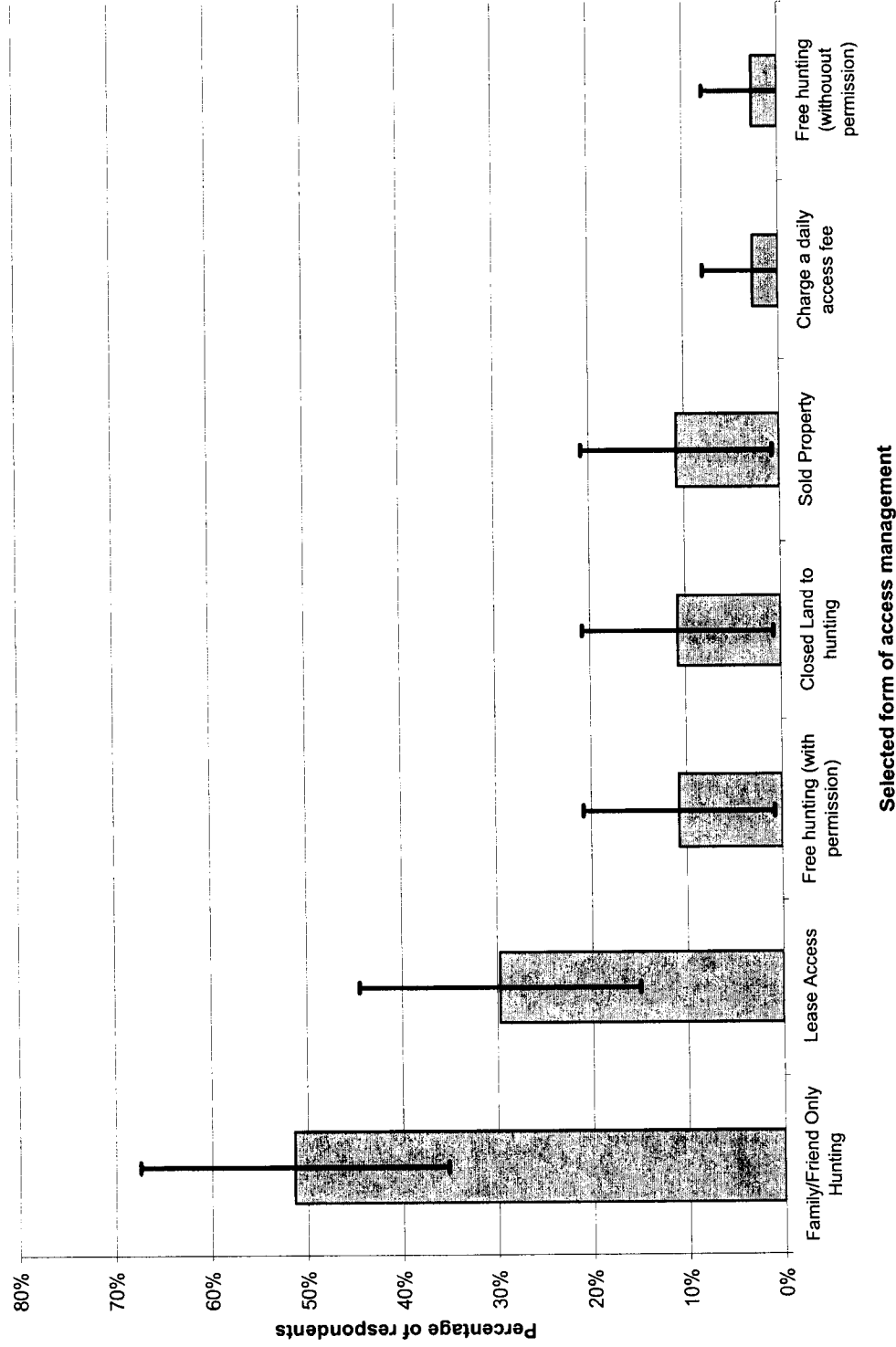


Figure 13. Types of access management past landowner participants reported they use since leaving Michigan's Hunting Access Program. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to provide multiple reasons.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

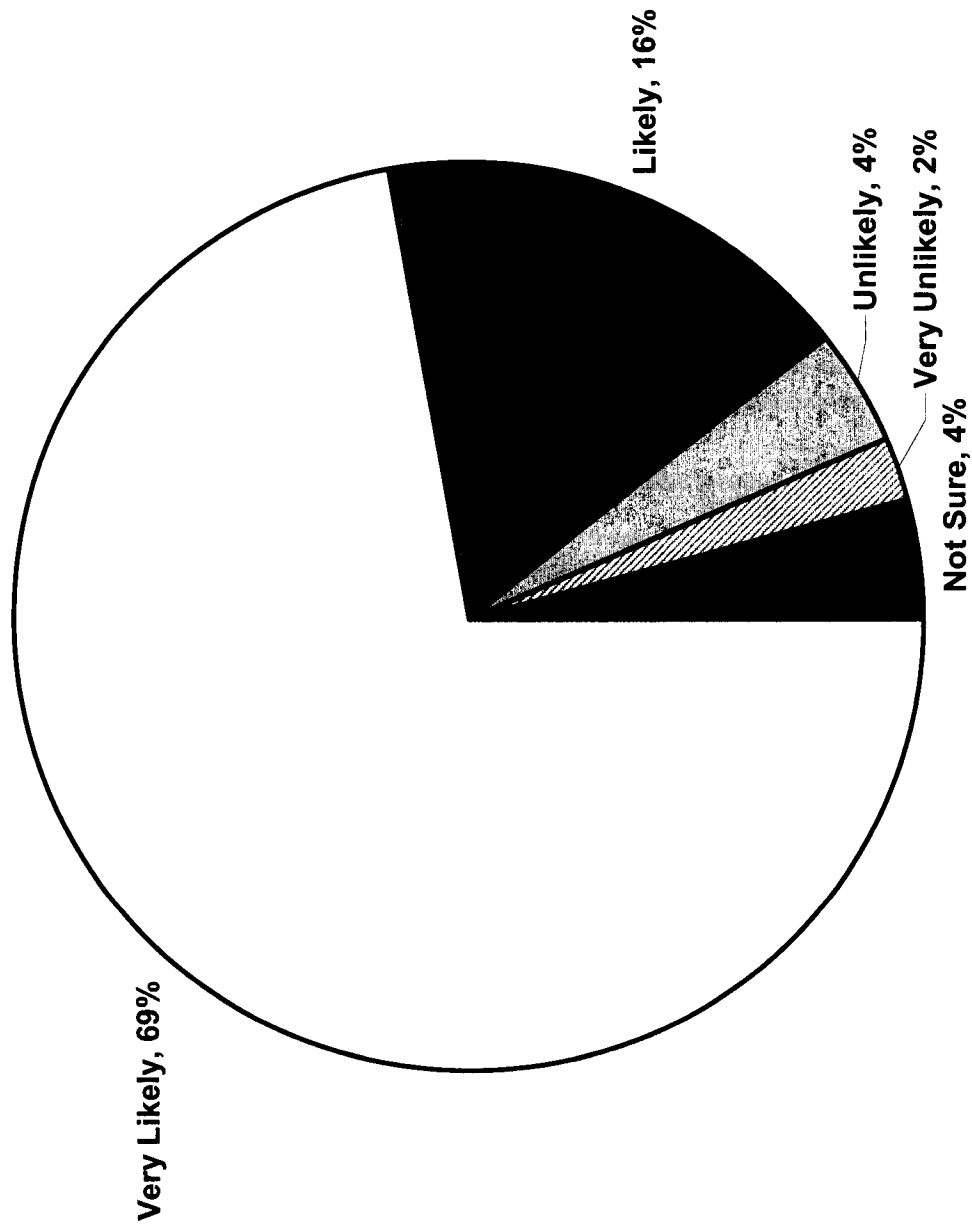


Figure 14. Likelihood that current Hunting Access Program landowner participants will re-enroll upon current lease expiration.

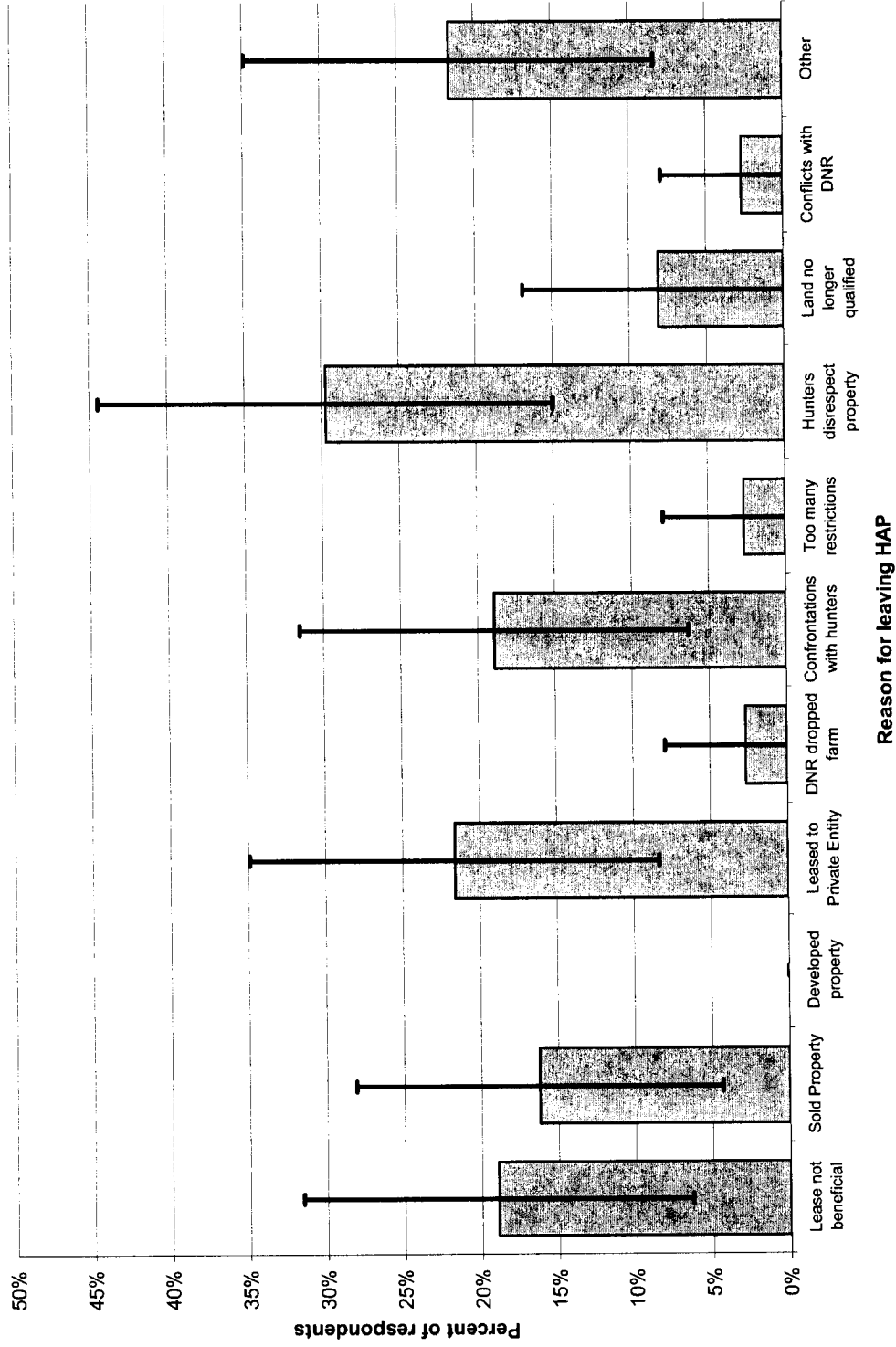


Figure 15. Reasons why Hunting Access Program past landowner participants removed their properties from the program. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to provide multiple reasons.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

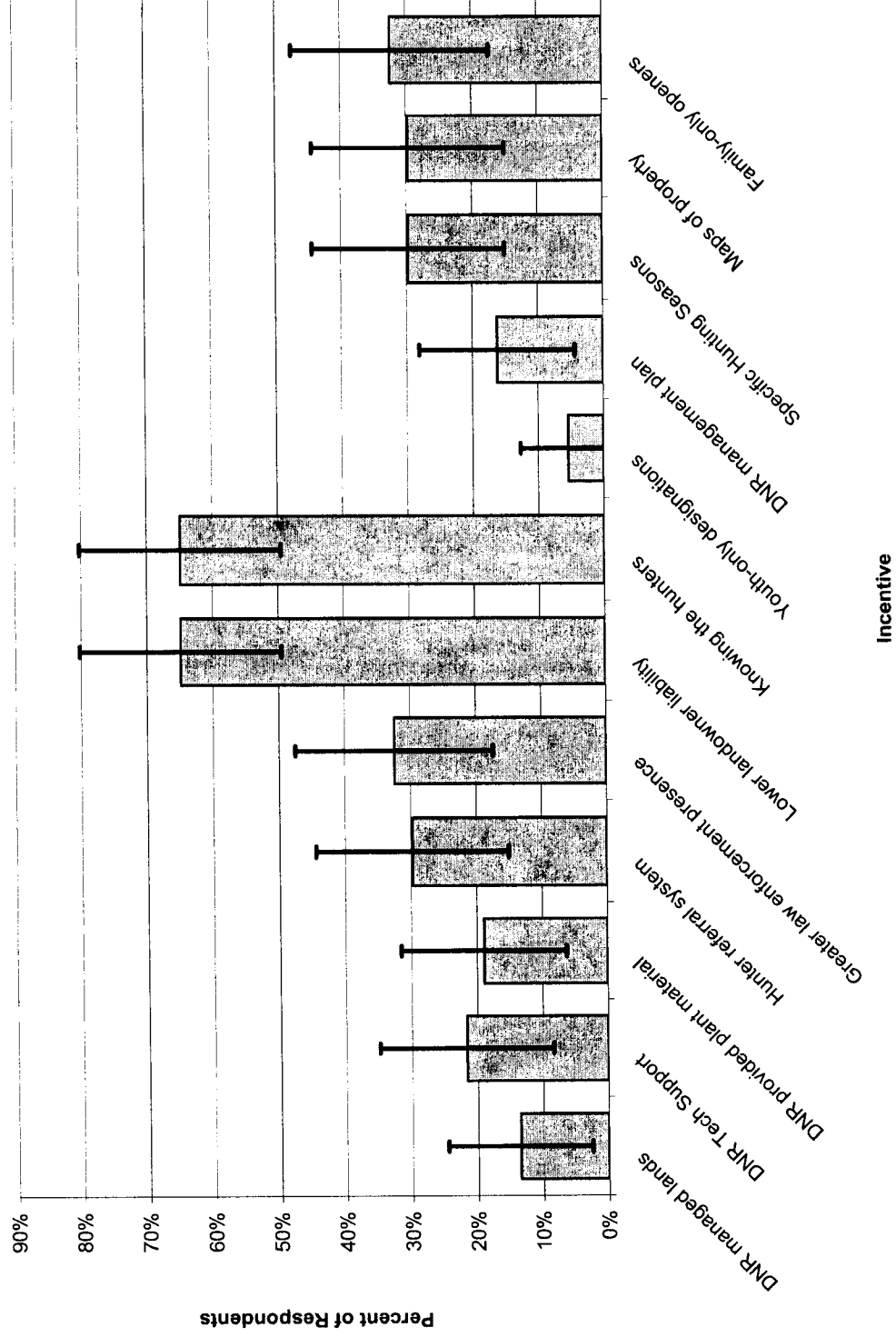


Figure 16. Importance of possible non-financial incentives to maintaining Michigan's Hunting Access Program, as identified by past landowner participants. (Total percentages may be greater than 100% because respondents were able to provide multiple answers.) Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Table 1. General characteristics of landowner participants in Michigan's Hunting Access Program

Participants	n	Years enrolled			Property sizes		
		mean	Min	Max	mean	Min	Max
Past landowners	37	6.8	1	20	168	44	1000
Current landowners	49	15.8	5	27	202	40	1126

Table 2. Results of choice model analysis for estimating influence of lease rate for encouraging Michigan landowners to enroll the Hunting Access Program, based on responses to question number 13 of the Past Landowner Participant Questionnaire (Appendix D)

Variable	Estimated Coefficients ( $\alpha$ , $\beta$ )	T-statistic ( $H_0$ : $\alpha$ or $\beta=0$ )	p-value
Constant	-4.426	-4.081	<0.0001
Lease Amount (Price)	0.2260	2.557	0.0106
Marginal Effect of Lease Price on Probability of Yes ( $\partial \text{Pr}(\text{yes})/\partial P$ )	0.0156	2.693	0.0071

## **APPENDIX A. Michigan Compiled Law statutes governing the Hunting Access Program and Recreational-use Liability.**

### **NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT) Act 451 of 1994**

\*\*\*\*\* 324.43556.amended *THIS AMENDED SECTION IS EFFECTIVE UPON HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION Z OF THE 92nd LEGISLATURE BECOMING A PART OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION OF 1963 AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 1 OF ARTICLE XII OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION OF 1963* \*\*\*\*\*

**324.43556.amended Hunter access leases on private land; lease payments; control of hunter access by participating landowners; cancellation of lease agreement; forfeiture of lease payments; posting boundaries of leased land; cause of action for injuries; orders.**

Sec. 43556.

- (1) The department may utilize the game and fish protection account for the purpose of acquiring and administering hunter access leases on private land.
- (2) The department may determine and provide lease payments in amounts that are related to the benefits the leased land provides for public use if for a designated lease period a participating landowner agrees to allow public access to certain lands for the purpose of hunting. Department field personnel shall inspect the lands and determine their value to the program. Final approval of lease proposals shall be made by the department.
- (3) Participating landowners have authority to control hunter access according to the terms of the lease agreement, including terms requiring a hunter to obtain verbal or written permission to hunt on the participating landowners' land.
- (4) Pursuant to rules adopted under this section, participating landowners may cancel their lease agreement at any time prior to the expiration of the lease. Cancellation of the agreement prior to the expiration of the lease shall result in the forfeiture of all lease payments that have been received by the participating landowner for the year in which cancellation occurs.
- (5) Participating landowners shall post, with signs provided by the department, the boundaries of land leased under this section.
- (6) A cause of action shall not arise for injuries to persons hunting on lands leased under this section unless the injuries were caused by the gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct of the owner, tenant, or lessee.
- (7) The department may issue orders pursuant to part 401 governing the administration and operation of a hunting access program.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 57, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995;—Am. 1996, Act 585, Eff. Mar. 1, 1997;—Am. 2004, Act 587, Eff. (pending).

**Compiler's note:** Enacting section 2 of Act 587 of 2004 provides:

"Enacting section 2. This amendatory act does not take effect unless House Joint Resolution Z of the 92nd Legislature becomes a part of the state constitution of 1963 as provided in section 1 of article XII of the state constitution of 1963."

**Popular name:** Act 451

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1994**

**324.73107 Action for injury to person on property of another; exception.**

Sec. 73107.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2), a cause of action shall not arise against the owner, tenant, or lessee of property for an injury to a person who is on that property with oral or written consent but who has not paid the owner, tenant, or lessee of that property valuable consideration for the recreational or trapping use of the property, unless the injury was caused by the gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct of the owner, tenant, or lessee.

(2) A cause of action shall not arise against the owner, tenant, or lessee of property for an injury to a person who is on that property with oral or written consent and has paid the owner, tenant, or lessee valuable consideration for fishing, trapping, or hunting on that property, unless that person's injuries were caused by a condition that involved an unreasonable risk of harm and all of the following apply:

- (a) The owner, tenant, or lessee knew or had reason to know of the condition or risk.
- (b) The owner, tenant, or lessee failed to exercise reasonable care to make the condition safe or to warn the person of the condition or risk.
- (c) The person injured did not know or did not have reason to know of the condition or risk.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 58, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

**Popular name:** Recreational Trespass Act

## APPENDIX B. Hunting Access Program Lease and Application



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
WILDLIFE DIVISION

### LEASE AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE ACCESS FOR PUBLIC HUNTING

By authority of Part 435, of Act 451, P.A. of 1994, as amended.

HUNTING PERMITS AVAILABLE AT:

NAME			TELEPHONE NUMBER	
ADDRESS			LEASE PERIOD September 1, _____ through May 31, _____	
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE		

IT IS HEREBY AGREED, This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ by and between

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No. or Tax I.D. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as LESSOR, and

the DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, for the STATE OF MICHIGAN, PO BOX 30444, LANSING MI 48909-7944, acting under authority of Part 435, of Act 451, Public Acts of 1994, as amended, hereinafter referred to as LESSEE, as follows:

The LESSOR, in consideration of the rental and agreements herein specified, does hereby LET and LEASE to the LESSEE for the purpose of providing access for public hunting for the following described properties within the State of Michigan.

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_ R \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Subsection \_\_\_\_\_ Acres \_\_\_\_\_

which contain(s) a total of \_\_\_\_\_ acres subject to this agreement. It is understood that this lease shall be operable during all hunting seasons between September 1, and May 31, of the Lease period specified above.

The LESSOR and LESSEE agree that the area can provide an adequate hunting experience for \_\_\_\_\_ hunters at one time.

The LESSEE shall in consideration of this agreement:

1. Provide signs necessary during the term of the lease to designate: Property Boundaries, Safety Zones, Farm Headquarters, Standing Crops - NO Hunting.
2. Provide LESSOR a supply of Hunting Permits and hunter registration forms.
3. Cause to be paid to the LESSOR after April 1 of each program year the following lease payment \$\_\_\_\_\_ (Expect payment about mid-April)

The LESSOR hereby covenants and agrees to:

1. Post and maintain one Farm Headquarter sign where hunting permits are issued throughout the year during the lease period.
2. Maintain signs which designate property boundaries.
3. Permit hunter use of leased premises WITHOUT payment of other compensation.  
Provide hunting permits daily at the before specified rate throughout the lease period.  
Not prohibit, restrict or discourage use of the premises by any action or by posting other signs such as, but not limited to, "No Hunting", "No Trespassing", "Private Property-No Hunting".
6. Obtain approval from the department to significantly alter land under the lease agreement. If land under a lease agreement IS altered in a manner THAT changes the value of the land for hunting purposes, the department may cancel OR RENEGOTIATE the lease agreement.
7. Not engage in any land management activity which would restrict public access including the application of sewage sludge or septic tank wastes.

PR 2027-1 (Rev. 07/09/1996)



The LESSOR and LESSEE further understand and agree that:

Use of the leased premises shall be enjoyed equally by all individuals without regard to race, color, creed, or sex; HOWEVER, the LESSOR may deny access on an individual basis under conditions or circumstances which, in the view of a reasonably prudent person may result in the increased likelihood of accident or damage to property;

The lease agreement may be terminated at any time by the landowner. A payment shall NOT be made if THE AGREEMENT IS terminated during the program year. An agreement may be terminated at the end of the program year without penalty;

A payment shall NOT be made under a lease agreement, and a lease may be CANCELLED by the department, if the department determines that:

1. There was a failure to permit hunting access under the terms of the lease agreement.
2. There was a failure to maintain access signs as stated above.
3. There was a failure to provide hunting permits under the terms of the lease agreement.
4. Hunting access was prohibited, restricted, or discouraged by any action or by posting of the property with signs such as, but not limited to, "No Hunting", "No Trespassing", "Private Property, No Trespassing".
5. Cropping schedule is significantly altered without approval.

Section 43556, Act 451, Public Acts of 1994 states, "A cause of action shall not arise for injuries to persons hunting on lands leased under this section unless the injuries were caused by the gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct of the owner, tenant, or lessee."

**LIABILITY.** Permittee hereby releases, waives, discharges and covenants not to sue, the State of Michigan, its departments, officers, employees and agents, from any and all liability to Permittee, its officers, employees and agents, for all losses, injury, death or damage, and any claims or demands therefore, on account of injury to person or property, of resulting in death of Permittee, its officers, employees or agents, whether caused by the State of Michigan, its departments, officers, employees or agents, in reference to the activities of this permit.

**INDEMNIFICATION.** Permittee hereby covenants and agrees to indemnify and save harmless, the State of Michigan, its departments, officers, employees and agents, from any and all claims and demands, for all loss, injury, death or damage, that any person or entity may have or make, in any manner, arising out of any occurrence related to (1) this permit; (2) the activities authorized by this permit; and (3) the use or occupancy of the premises which are the subject of this permit, as well as any other state-owned lands. This indemnification and save harmless agreement shall extend to all loss, injury, death or damage, proximately caused or arising out of the negligence of the State of Michigan, its departments, officers, employees and agents.

This lease agreement is subject to rules and regulations adopted under the Hunting Access Program.

The covenants, conditions and agreements made and entered into by the several parties hereto are declared binding on their respective heirs, successors, representatives and assigns.

LESSOR

LESSEE

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
Owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wildlife Management Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenant or Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lease Prepared By



Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Division-Wildlife Management Program  
**APPLICATION FOR HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM**  
BY AUTHORITY OF PART 435, OF ACT 451, P.A. 1994, AS AMENDED

**PLEASE PRINT**

YEAR \_\_\_\_\_

Landowner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time to Call: \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ or Tax Payer I.D. Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Permits to be Issued From (Address): \_\_\_\_\_  
County: \_\_\_\_\_ Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Section(s): \_\_\_\_\_

	ACRES	BASE RATE	HABITAT QUALITY BONUS-UP TO	HABITAT QUALITY INDEX	LEASE AMOUNT
<b>WETLAND WILDLIFE (WW)</b>					
1. Aquatic & Herbaceous Wetlands including bogs.		4.00	4.00		
<b>FARMLAND WILDLIFE (FA)</b>					
2. Rotation crops with cover.		0.50	1.00		
3. Idle fields not in rotation.		3.00	3.00		
4. Grain crops planted for wildlife.		25.00			
5. Brush Habitat		4.00	4.00		
<b>FOREST WILDLIFE (FW)</b>					
6. Aspen/Birch Woodlands		4.00	4.00		
7. Oak/Hickory Woodlands		4.00	4.00		
8. Northern Hardwood Woodlands		3.00	3.00		
9. Lowland Hardwood Woodlands		3.00	3.00		
10. Conifer Dominated Woodlands		2.00	2.00		
11. Idle Orchards		4.00			
12. Active Orchards		2.00			
13. Ineligible Cropland and Pastured land.		0.00			
14. Special Situation Bonus		Up to 2.00		Rate	

**TOTAL FARM ACREAGE**

High Quality Habitat Areas  
(Categories 1-12) \_\_\_\_\_  
Ineligible Cropland and  
Pasture (13) \_\_\_\_\_  
Safety Zones and  
Farm Headquarters \_\_\_\_\_

Total Farm Acreage \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR DNR APPRAISER**

Best Hunting Opportunity For:

Category 1-Wetland Wildlife(WW) \_\_\_\_\_  
Category 2 & 13 Cropland & Pasture (CC) \_\_\_\_\_  
Category 3-5 Farmland Wildlife (FA) \_\_\_\_\_  
Category 6-12 Forest Wildlife (FW) \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR DNR USE ONLY

**APPLICANT:** Please mail your completed application form to one of the addresses listed on the back of this form. **DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION IS JULY 1.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
PR 2057 3/96

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C. Questions asked of Current Landowner Participants (CLP).

1. How much land do you have enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?  
\_\_\_\_\_ acres

2. How many years have you had land enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please check each of the following reasons that caused you to enroll land in Michigan's Hunting Access Program. For each item you check, please indicate how satisfied you were with what the program provided. (Check all that apply)

- |                                                                                                           | Very Satisfied                        | Moderately Satisfied                  | Not Satisfied                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> To help alleviate wildlife crop damage                              | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> To get management assistance from DNR biologists                    | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> To get help from DNR law enforcement for trespass or other problems | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <sup>4</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> To have a better system for granting hunter access to my properties | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <sup>5</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> To obtain financial benefits from hunter use of my properties       | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <sup>6</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                                        | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. What percentages of your enrolled properties are farmed?  
(If none, answer "0%") \_\_\_\_\_%

5. Do you plant foodplots, leave portions of crops for wildlife, or conduct any other forms of habitat management on your lands enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?

<sup>1</sup> ☐ Yes <sup>2</sup> ☐ No

6. Which of the following species do you (or your immediate family) hunt on your properties enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program? (Check all that apply.)

- |                                                     |                                                    |                                                      |                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Deer          | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel     | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon        | <sup>4</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote/Fox |
| <sup>5</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfowl     | <sup>6</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Grouse       | <sup>7</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant       | <sup>8</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Quail      |
| <sup>9</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey        | <sup>10</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbit/Hare | <sup>11</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove | <sup>12</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure  |
| <sup>13</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <sup>14</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> None        |                                                      |                                                  |

7. How has enrollment in Michigan's Hunting Access Program affected the number of occurrences of the following hunting-related problems during hunting season on your properties enrolled in the program

- |             | Has never been a problem              | Fewer Now                             | No Change                             | More Now                              |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Poaching    | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>4</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trespassing | <sup>1</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> | <sup>4</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Property destruction 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐  
 Negative confrontations with users of the property 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐  
 Theft 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

**8. Have you ever needed to contact law enforcement personnel for assistance with problems associated with properties you have enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

**9. If you answered "Yes" to question eight, how satisfied were you with the response by law enforcement personnel? (Please circle one)**

1 Very Satisfied 2 Satisfied 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied  
 4 Dissatisfied 5 Very Dissatisfied

**10. If Michigan's Hunting Access Program was no longer available, how would you choose to manage hunter access on your property? (Check all that apply)**

1 ☐ Lease access to private hunting parties 2 ☐ Charge a daily (or use) fee for hunting  
 3 ☐ Only allow family and friends to hunt 4 ☐ Allow free hunting with permission  
 5 ☐ Would close my land to hunting 6 ☐ Allow free hunting without permission  
 7 ☐ Not Sure 8 ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Would you recommend Michigan's Hunting Access Program to other landowners? (Please check one and explain)**

1 ☐ Yes Please explain your answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
 2 ☐ No \_\_\_\_\_

**12. How likely are you to renew your land enrollment in Michigan's Hunting Access Program, when the current lease expires? (Please circle one)**

1 Very Likely 2 Somewhat Likely 3 Unlikely 4 Very Unlikely 5 Not sure

**13. Do you have additional southern Michigan properties which would qualify for (but are not enrolled in) Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

**14. If you answered "Yes" to question 13, what are the reasons these lands are not enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

(Check all that apply.)

1 ☐ Concern over crop/livestock damages 2 ☐ Concern over other property damage  
 3 ☐ Too close to residence 4 ☐ DNR lease provides too little money  
 5 ☐ To protect habitat 6 ☐ To prevent over-harvest of game

<sup>7</sup> ☐ Not Sure

<sup>8</sup> ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**15. What incentives would influence you to remain enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

**16. What problems would influence you to remove your properties from Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

**17. Please provide us with your own recommendations regarding how the Michigan DNR can improve our Hunting Access Program?**

**Additional Comments** *(Attach additional pages if necessary):*

#### APPENDIX D. Questions asked of Past Landowner Participants (PLP).

1. How much land did you have enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program? \_\_\_\_\_ acres
2. How many years did you have your land enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Please check each of the following reasons that caused you to enroll land in Michigan's Hunting Access Program. For each item you check, please indicate how satisfied you were with what the program provided. *(Check all that apply)*

	Very Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Not Satisfied
a <input type="checkbox"/> To help alleviate wildlife crop damage	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
b <input type="checkbox"/> To get management assistance from DNR biologists	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
c <input type="checkbox"/> To get help from DNR law enforcement for trespass or other problems	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
d <input type="checkbox"/> To have a better system for granting hunter access to my properties	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
e <input type="checkbox"/> To obtain financial benefits from hunter use of my properties	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
f <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. What percentage of your previously enrolled properties was farmed?  
*(If none, answer "0%")* \_\_\_\_\_ %
5. Did you plant foodplots, leave portions of crops for wildlife, or conduct any other forms of habitat management on your lands that were enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?  
  

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No
6. Which of the following species did you (or your immediate family) hunt on your properties while enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?  
*(Check all that apply.)*

1 <input type="checkbox"/> Deer	2 <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon	4 <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote/Fox
5 <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfowl	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grouse	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Quail
9 <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey	10 <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbit/Hare	a <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove	b <input type="checkbox"/> Not Sure
c <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	d <input type="checkbox"/> None		

**7. How did enrollment in Michigan's Hunting Access Program affect the number of occurrences of the following hunting-related problems during hunting season on your properties enrolled in the program?**

	Was never a problem	Decreased	Did not Change	Increased
Poaching	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Trespassing	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Property destruction	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Negative confrontations with users of the property	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Theft	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Did you ever need to contact law enforcement personnel for assistance with problems associated with properties you had enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No (Please skip to #10)

**9. If you answered "Yes" to question eight, how satisfied were you with the response by law enforcement personnel? (Please circle one)**

1 Very Satisfied 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied 5 Very Dissatisfied  
2 Satisfied 4 Dissatisfied

**10. Since your property was removed from Michigan's Hunting Access Program, how have you chosen to manage hunter access on your property? (Check all that apply)**

- 1 ☐ Lease access to private hunting parties 2 ☐ Charge a daily (or use) fee for hunting  
3 ☐ Only allow family and friends to hunt 4 ☐ Allow free hunting with permission  
5 ☐ Closed my land to hunting 6 ☐ Allow free hunting without permission  
7 ☐ Not Sure 8 ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. What were your reasons for removing your property from Michigan's Hunting Access Program? (Check all that apply)**

- 1 ☐ DNR lease was no longer beneficial 2 ☐ Sold the property  
3 ☐ Developed the property 4 ☐ Leased hunting rights to a private entity

- <sup>5</sup> ☐ DNR removed property from program      <sup>6</sup> ☐ Negative confrontations with hunters
- <sup>7</sup> ☐ Too many restrictions      <sup>8</sup> ☐ Hunters disrespected property
- <sup>9</sup> ☐ Land no longer qualified for program      <sup>10</sup> ☐ Had conflicts with the DNR
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>12. If Michigan's Hunting Access Program was being revitalized; as a landowner, which of the following would you suggest be included in such a program?</b>	Critically Important	Very Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Unimportant	Not Sure
DNR should manage public access on the property	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
DNR provide technical support and property maintenance	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
DNR supply plant materials (e.g., seedlings, seed, etc...) for habitat management	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
System of hunter application and referral	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Greater law enforcement presence	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced liability	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Knowing who and when a hunter is on the property	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Limit access to only youth/mentoring programs	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
DNR developed management plans for your enrolled properties	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Landowner ability to designate properties as only accessible for specific hunting seasons	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
DNR developed maps for your enrolled properties	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Landowner ability to designate opening days for "family only"	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>



**The rates offered by the Department of Natural Resources for leasing hunting access on private lands have increased since the inception of the Michigan Hunting Access Program. The lease rates offered to individual farms vary depending upon the type and quality of wildlife habitat present on the property. Currently, the average lease rate is about \$5.55 per acre.**

- 13. If leasing rates were raised so that the average payment became \$7.00 per acre, would you re-enroll your property in Michigan's Hunting Access Program?**

<sup>1</sup> ☐ Yes <sup>2</sup> ☐ No

- 14. Additional Comments** (Please use the space below to provide any comments or recommendations regarding the improvement of Michigan's Hunting Access Program.)

**APPENDIX E. Specific examples of problems, quoted by Current Landowner Participants, that would influence them to remove their properties from Michigan's Hunting Access Program.**

- *"Increased problems with trespassing"*
- *"Lack of funds from the state"*
- *"A length of time with ungrateful hunters and not following our land use rules"*
- *"none"*
- *"Can get more money by leasing"*
- *"Support from DNR controlling the amount of hunters; the seasons was Oct +Nov but now it runs from Oct until May of next year"*
- *"Too many permanent tree stands no help from MDNR law enforcement. Want me to GPS them."*
- *"None"*
- *"Damage to the property or a hunting accident. Too little payment for use of the property"*
- *"none"*
- *"Reduction in 'rent'"*
- *"I don't for-see any problems."*
- *"Details! Our address has not been updated and referenced to a self service box not noted - - so we get numerous hunters stopping at the old location and talking to our renters about hunting. Errors on the map (laminated) at the site when hunters don't get along"*
- *"Problem with hunters"*
- *"tree stands too close to property lines"*
- *"Non-payment; non-control over program"*
- *"Liability; Trespassing by hunters"*
- *"Hunters that act like they own the land. And we have had some like that"*
- *"Trash and no respect for property"*
- *"I don't know"*

- *"Want in don't go on"*
- *"There have been no problems"*
- *"The drive anywhere attitude; no one available for hunting instructions"*
- *"we have too many hunters"*
- *"If hunters start abusing access"*
- *"money"*
- *"Reduction of elimination of fees"*
- *"Problems with hunters not following the rules; if sold the property"*
- *"Better acre pay from others"*
- *"If I sell my land"*
- *"Low payment to landowners; increasing number of hunters each year; arguments between hunters"*
- *"Anymore garbage dumped or trees ruined by hunters"*

**APPENDIX F. Examples of incentives, quoted by Current Landowner Participants, that would influence them to remain enrolled in Michigan's Hunting Access Program.**

- *"Too many deer and property damage"*
- *"Higher lease rate"*
- *"More compensation"*
- *"Somewhat higher payment per acre"*
- *"More money"*
- *"Financial benefits"*
- *"To return to the CRP program"*
- *"Higher Payments"*
- *"Controll of amount of hunters; raise the rent"*
- *"Good Program"*
- *"Better payment for use of the property and assuming liability"*
- *"It helps with taxes the takes are going up every year so more money would help"*
- *"More money"*
- *"A higher per acre rate for the hunting program. We have been offered over twice as much by parties of 4 or 5 people. But we much prefer leasing it to the DNR so a lot of people can hunt that would otherwise not have a place to hunt. Many have been greatful too. Saying thank-you over and over."*
- *"\$ for cropland"*
- *"mostly the payment and insurance"*
- *"more money"*
- *"more financial benefits"*
- *"Continue program as is"*
- *"If they raised the base money"*
- *"Meeting hunters and controlling where they hunt"*
- *"I don't know"*

- *"More money would be nice. It would help."*
- *"Habitat enhancement; repopulate small game species from overpopulated areas ie squirrel, rabbit, and birds"*
- *"more money"*
- *"Keep down overpopulation of game"*
- *"Pay the going rate for hunting lease"*
- *"more contact with the DNR"*
- *"More money to pay taxes"*
- *"Raise the rate per acre in the program"*
- *"Increase payment to landowners"*
- *"Greater Payment; More watch by DNR regarding deer hunters who put up stands put nails and step screws into good trees"*
- *"Higher payments"*